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IN HIMALAYAN TIBET

A RECORD OF 12 YEARS SPENT IN THE TOPSY-TURVY LAND OF LESSER TIBET WITH A DESCRIPTION OF ITS CHEERY FOLK, THEIR WAYS & RELIGION, OF THE RIGOURS OF THE CLIMATE & BEAUTIES OF THE COUNTRY, ITS FAUNA AND FLORA

BY
A. REEVE HEBER M.D., Ch.B.
&
KATHLEEN M. HEBER M.B., Ch.B., B.Sc.

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS & MAP

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MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

TO

OUR TWO DAUGHTERS,

HELEN & JOSEPHINE,

TO REMIND THEM OF THE LAND OF

THEIR EARLY CHILDHOOD

Preface

IN writing the following pages, we are very conscious of the help we have received from many sources, for which we express our heartiest thanks.

First and foremost, we remember our many Tibetan friends who, by allowing us to enter their homes and to watch them at their work and play, have enabled us to learn much about their inner life. We bear in particular remembrance our two Ladaki friends, Nyenpo Joseph Gergan and Nyenpo Dawazung Dana, who so willingly put at our disposal their profound knowledge of their own country, its history and customs.

Without reference to Dr. A. H. Franke's historical researches our second chapter could not have been written. To him we also owe the two stories of Dardish heroes; and Colonel Waddell's "Lamaism" is a store of information.

We have further to mention some other friends, Mr. Basil Crump and Mrs. A. C. Cleather, whose knowledge of Buddhism is so profound. They have often shown us the significance of things not realized before, while Mr. Crump has most generously allowed us to draw on his splendid collection of photographs. Our gratitude is due also to Major Robson, I.A., a former British Joint Commissioner, and to Miss Lucy McCormick, for so very kindly allowing us to make use of some of their photographs.

Finally we would thank Miss J. J. Ferguson for her invaluable assistance in preparing the manuscript for the printers.

Our purpose in writing the book, was to fulfil an oft-expressed want for a popular and not highly technical account of the land and the people. There is still much to say about our Ladaki friends, but we hope that what we have been able to recount in the following pages will give the reader a real interest in these lovable inhabitants of the roof of the World.

KATHLEEN MARY HEBER.
A. REEVE HEBER.

LEH, *August* 4, 1925.

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IN HIMALAYAN TIBET

CHAPTER I

Introduction to the Land & People

ONCE upon a time" is the orthodox beginning for all stories of fairy-land, and indeed the words "here and now" seem far too prosaic to introduce a new-comer into a land where those, who can still look out on the world with a child's wonderment and imagination, may actually see such living and moving embodiment of gnomes, elves, quaint old witches, weird old wizards in such appropriately fantastic and grotesque settings that they may well feel they have reached the veritable home of merry sprites and strange goblins. Could anything be more gnome-like than the little children playing in the roads and lanes, peeping shyly round dark corners or out of mysterious cracked doors, or darting away down queer passages leading under and through houses, quaint little individuals with merry brown faces, sometimes flat and Mongolian in type, but often with large lustrous brown eyes, probably from a Kashmiri admixture. See these elf-like little faces framed in the astrakhan edging of their high fur-lined caps with turned-up corners, a fashion worn by all ages and sexes, including the pig-tailed men, these very corners being so typical of the whole goblin land. So, too, are the still taller peaked mitre-shaped hats of the lamas, red or yellow, while the national head-dress or "Perag" of the women, is the most extraordinary thing of

all, and must have a detailed description later on. Then look at their dwellings, strange habitations of mud and stones, crudely put together with crooked lines and strange little tiny windows, with or without a rough wooden framework. The larger of these may have a wooden partition down the centre of the framework, and the upper edge of the latter is curved upwards in each partition, adding the expression of an eyebrow to the aperture. Through such windows it is quite common to see the solemn face of an old goat looking out, his long beard waggling to his meditative munch as he surveys the street below. How strange it seems to our Western ideas to have a goat upstairs and free to wander all over the house. But here we shall slowly find that in one example after another "the things go the other way." We are not exactly in Looking-glass Land, but we are certainly in some sort of Wonderland, where many things are upside-down, topsy-turvy or just the reverse of our notions of correctness, and where the strangest incongruities prevail.

To start with the houses, our best rooms are on the ground floor ; as you ascend the rooms decrease in importance, and the uppermost ones are relegated to lumber or to the least important members of the household. In Ladak, on the contrary, the higher you go the better the rooms, and the flat roof is the most used place of all, especially in the sunny hours of winter, when many domestic activities can be carried out in the warm sunshine there, and thereby the precious fuel be saved. Often there is a small porch on one side, a shelter from the keen spring winds or a shade from the heat of summer. The fact that horse-manure or cows' dung is spread out in patches on the floor to dry, or that the chimney of the summer kitchen-room is busy fulfilling its functions near-by, does not at all detract from the desirability of this lofty open-air sitting room. Descending, we come to a large room with an open verandah, which can be closed in by

short planks, and whose wooden framework may be crudely carved; this will be the summer kitchen-living-room. Its winter counterpart, a smaller, darker room, will be found on the second floor, the windows being glazed by small panes in the most advanced houses, while the others are stuffed with bundles of rags or closed in with pieces of paper, for which we often receive requests at the beginning of winter. The ground floor serves to stable the cattle, who thus provide a warm atmosphere at the base of the house in the severe winter, a mild basement heating. What we may thus term the biological warmth of winter concentration is shared also by the fowls, who arrive at night in the winter kitchen-living-room, and by this means are persuaded to lay occasionally even throughout that bitter season.

Our idea of the place for a flower garden is just outside the front door and around the house, but these people cannot spare land there, for, if the house is built on land, which can be irrigated, every bit must be used for agriculture, and any spare little plot for a few vegetables. But their appreciation of flowers is seen by the boxes full of gay blossom on roof or balcony, and the place for a "buttonhole," in the absence of our tailor-made provision, is behind the ears, giving a much more saucy effect, especially when so near to sparkling brown eyes. Not only may there be a flower garden on the roof, but it is not uncommon to see a tent pitched there for shade and summer sleeping purposes. Sleep itself is most easily invited in the knee-elbow position, clothes being removed and used to augment the bedding. In spite of this unfavourable position the Ladaki is not guiltless of snoring, but much the reverse! In our civilization the poorest will aim at being tidy outside. Not so the Ladaki. He wears his oldest dress outside, and his best one underneath, reversing the order for special occasions. Roughly sewn patches are applied at any angle; there is no need to attempt invisible patching as we do, for the more patches with the edges over-

lapping, the warmer the dress. Our chief meals are completed with a hot beverage, such as coffee, but they begin as well as end theirs with their butter-tea. Even the teeth of the carpenter's saw are sloped in the wrong direction compared with ours. If we listen to the cow, we note that she descends the scale as she moos, whereas our western cows moo from below upwards.

With us the protrusion of the tongue is a sign of contempt and derision, and is certainly not regarded as a sign of good breeding! With the Tibetan it is a very polite form of greeting, and its involuntary production often occurs from embarrassment or astonishment. In the west we wait for admittance at the door of the house. In Ladak, the house is penetrated until the desired one is found. When the "Doctor Sahib" was ill in bed not long after our arrival in Ladak, and while we were still learning many new things, the door between his bedroom and the dining-room suddenly opened to admit a not over-cleanly looking individual, with a loudly squawking and protesting cock under his arm, a token of gratitude for the "Doctor Sahib" from one of his patients, but the "Mem Sahib" would have preferred to receive it on his behalf further from the sensitive radius of a badly aching head. When our little girl donned a lamb-skin coat with the white fur outside, it was considered to be a most inside-out proceeding, while in Ladak hats are worn indoors as well as out-of-doors by both sexes. Even their treatment of nature seems to be the wrong way round, for they pray for sun to relieve a drought; but we have only to remember that the water supply and irrigation of the fields are entirely dependent on the summer melting of the winter snows away up on the mountain heights. Although the native doctors get plenty of rewards in both food and cash, it is often made plain to the European doctor that the reward for his services is the merit he wins, no doubt the reason for his leaving his own country and coming to such a far land, unless it be that the unaccount-

able British Government is paying him some large salary for his services !

Strange is it to see the extraordinary mixture of finery and rags in their religious services, ceremonies and festivals, the rich brocaded Chinese silk gowns of the dancing lamas having little tags of cheapest gaudily-dyed butter muslin attached, while beautiful clothes are surmounted by tinselled hats, the latter the sort of rubbish that children love for " dressing up " in the west. Strange too, is the mixture of clownishness and solemnity, as seen especially at the Hemis festival. In the altars of little private chapels in the homes of the richer Buddhists, the most beautiful metal work will be found side-by-side with a cracked cup or an old tin, while in the matter of dress, dirt and finery often go together, nor do they seem to see the former in demanding a price for a second-hand, one might say an " umpteenth " hand, garment with beautiful Chinese embroidery, but so tattered and frayed and soiled, that a European can only reject it.

So does one thing after the other seem to our ideas the wrong way round in this strange land, where the term *mgologpa* (" head-turned " or " back to front " man) is a common term of reproach. But is it they who are, as it were, the wrong side of the Looking-Glass, or are we ?

Some years ago one of our colleagues in the course of conversation with a Ladaki, referred to their peculiar and distinctive smell, and was filled with surprise and chagrin when he was told that that was quite comprehensible, for we *Pyigling pa* (pronounced Pilingpa, being literally outsiders, *i.e.*, foreigners) had an unpleasant odour in the Ladaki estimation also. Having some idea of the ratio of their ablutions to ours, this was a distinct blow to the Sahibs' vanity !

In attempting to understand this land and people, we must therefore remember that we are the outsiders and ours are the extraordinary ideas and standards. After all, is it not much wiser to expose your older dress to the daily wear and

tear, and keep your best one clean, yet availing yourself of its warmth, instead of putting it away to get moth-eaten? How much better to have your garden on the roof, where the passer-by may not be tempted to snatch a blossom over an easily knocked-down mud wall, and as for having your best room at the top of the house, it certainly has the better view there, and is further removed from the dust and the smell of the narrow lanes, which are only scavenged by the unclaimed street-dogs and the indefatigable crows and ravens. Indeed, but for these unrecognized friends, aided by the dryness of the climate and the long winter frost, the town would soon be uninhabitable for lack of sanitation. So let us hope that living among these strange people may develop in us a sweet reasonableness as to differences of opinion, which perhaps some of our insulated compatriots may find it more difficult to obtain. As another colleague frequently reminds us, they think we are all mad, some more than others. True, we have invented "motres" (motors), telegraphy, electric lighting and other wonders seen in Srinagar, the nearest point of real civilization, but who, save more or less mad people could produce such strange inventions? Probably the demons have revealed such tricks to us. Was not the Great White Queen Victoria herself a demon, demonstrated by the fact that she rode side-saddle? At any rate if challenged as to the rightness of his methods, the Ladaki can point out that his civilization is older than ours, and this same antiquity is adduced by him as an argument in favour of his religion as compared with ours.

CHAPTER II

The Past Story of Ladak

A VERY cursory glance at the country suffices to show how ancient their civilization must be. Almost every village has its ruins of castle or fort or monastery, perched up on the rocky hillside in apparently inaccessible positions, and in most places will be found the village bard who can recount strange tales of long ago, often breaking out into song in the course of his narrative. But there are many written records, too, for the Buddhist lamas have inscribed the happenings of olden times with golden ink on beautifully polished black paper (in fairy-land surely all records are kept in gold !), and Kings have acquired much merit for themselves by building long prayer walls, and much gratitude from the student of historical research by inserting a tablet of stone on which the name of the builder and certain valuable bits of historical information are engraved. By the laborious study of such records Dr. Francke, the modern historian of Western Tibet, has been able to piece together a connected, albeit fragmentary history of the country. A brief glance at this will give us the historical background necessary for the understanding of present conditions in Ladak.

The first mention of the country seems to have been made by Herodotus, who describes a land of wonderful ants, who in burrowing out their homes in the earth threw up gold. These ants were said to be nearly as large as dogs, and still more ferocious, with a keen sense of smell and great fleetness of

foot. This made it very difficult for the Indians who wanted the gold to obtain it, and the only method found possible was to fetch the gold day by day when the ants slept, and bear it away on swift horses. Ants said to be of this wonderful species, were pointed out to Dr. Francke, but they must have considerably shrunk since the days of their fame, for they were now of normal size. But what sort of people inhabited the land in these ancient times? Doubtless, the first dwellers were Tibetan nomads, who wandered about on the immense upland plains of the Himalayas with their large flocks of sheep, goats, and yaks, moving on from pasture to pasture as they still do, so slowly does the East change.

Even now one need go only as far as the Chantang, some ten marches from Leh, to see just the same picture as these far-off days presented. Still each family has its funny little black tent, woven of yak's hair, and with a large hole in the roof to let out the smoke, for the food is cooked on an open fire within. Two or three families settle down with their herds in one place until the grass is exhausted, when they move on to the next grazing ground. Abraham in his day must have lived similarly on a larger scale. These nomads were probably adherents of the old religion, called the "Bon Chos," from which arise the elements of demon-worship in the Lamaism of to-day. About this time Indian Buddhism was manifesting a keen missionary spirit, and sending out men to spread its doctrine and enlightenment far and wide. Among those some came to the Western Himalayas leaving traces of religion which had come up direct from India, not *via* Tibet. Thus on a medical tour to the neighbouring province of Zankskar, a village was found where almost every fourth man wore the yellow saffron robe of the down-country Buddhist priest. The descendants of these early missionaries called Mons are still plentiful in the land, yet they have remained quite distinct from the original inhabitants. If you want a door made, you must fetch the Mon carpenter. If you want to hear of the brave

actions of the mythical "King Kesar," it is the Mon musician who will tell you about them, interspersing his story with song. If you have to arrange for a wedding, or any sort of *ltadmo* (entertainment) you must not omit to call the Mon drummer, who will sustain the enthusiasm of your guests by beating his queer little kettle drum. It is strange how these people have lived in the country for so many centuries without absorption, but although caste does not exist here in the sense it does in India, it often crops up in questions of marriage and a *Bod* (Tibetan Buddhist) must not marry a Mon.

The next people to arrive in the land were the Dards, who seem to have emigrated from the district of Gilgit, and they, too, have preserved a separateness through the centuries, having a distinct dress of their own, nor, although they are called Buddhists, does their Buddhism quite conform with that obtaining in the rest of Ladak. Later when we meet them on tour, we shall have more to tell about these interesting folk.

We may now leave behind us the history based on conjecture and turn to that founded on written records either inscribed on parchment or engraved on stone, the chroniclers being the priests, reminding us of the priestly scribes of our own past history. Before William the Conqueror landed in England, a great religious struggle was in progress, both in Central and in Western Tibet. The relations between these two kingdoms have always been rather close. The opposing faiths were the old *Bon Chos*, consisting mainly of demon-worship, and the later Buddhism. The latter was waxing stronger, but the older religion still looked to one, Langdarma, to revive their ancient worship. Langdarma had really been heir to the Tibetan throne, but had been disinherited on account of his adherence to the old faith, and his younger brother had obtained the kingship. Langdarma, however, managed to dispose of the latter, took the crown, and laid a heavy hand on the Buddhist monasteries and priests, but his

triumph was short-lived. A Buddhist priest disguised in the black sacerdotal robes of the *Bon Chos*, presented himself before the King with a petition, and, when near enough, drew from his ample robes a bow and arrow and killed the leader of his religious enemies. The assassin escaped by turning his coat inside out and showing the white lining.

Langdarma reigned about A.D. 900 and from him all the kings of Ladak have descended, for although they are split up into two dynasties, the later one is traced from a younger brother of the last king of the first line. An account of what happened under the various kings of these dynasties would be beyond the scope of this book, but let us rapidly trace the fortunes of the Western Himalayan kingdom, now represented by Ladak, and formerly including also the province of Baltistan. At first various royal personages held sway in different parts of the country, but the one in Leh was a descendant of the King of the Central Kingdom (Tibet proper), while in another part there ruled a Dard King. Between these two Kings there was continual strife, but at last the Leh ruler seems to have won the mastery in matters temporal, and increasingly in matters spiritual. One King introduced Buddhist literature from Central Tibet, another made it obligatory on all candidates for the priesthood to go to Lhasa for their training. This can only be regretted by the student of Ladaki as distinct from Tibetan literature, for, besides putting a stop to the growth of Indian Buddhism, it also inhibited the literary genius of this people, whose tales of by-gone days indicate how their literature might have developed.

By about the time of the fourteenth century Buddhism had quite prevailed, and, as is so often seen with this religion, having once subdued the indigenous faith, it incorporated much of the *Bon Chos* in its own tenets. The Lamaism of the present day thus consists of a large proportion of *Bon Chos* with a smaller mixture of Buddhism, the former still

making its old appeal to the illiterate people of the land, while only a few of the more erudite priests know anything of pure Buddhism. Even this mixed religion soon became corrupt, and in 1378 the Buddhist reformer of Tibet, Tsong-kapa, appeared, who tried to bring the priesthood back to the pure Buddhism of "Sangs rgyas," the Tibetan name for the Buddha, Sakya Muni. Finding the Tibetan priests wore red robes, while the true Buddhist priest should wear yellow, and, unable to get them to accept the orthodox dress, like a good Buddhist he compromised by insisting on yellow caps and sashes being worn with the former red gown. The reformed sect were not supposed to marry, but the unattractiveness of true celibacy could easily be overcome by a legal quibble applied to the prevalent custom of polyandry. The so-called "yellow lamas" were not allowed to eat meat, nor to drink "chang," the local beer. So now we get the two sects of yellow and red lamas existing side by side both in Tibet proper and in Ladak, in much the same way that Roman Catholics and Protestants have existed side by side in Europe. Yet for a long time there was not much hostility between the two sects, though one king might favour one and another the other.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Lodros Chokldan was ruling in Leh, whilst at Tingmogang, situated on the old high road, where ruins of the old royal castle may still be seen, his cousin Bagan lived and ruled. The latter allied himself with a third ruler, and these two defeated the king of Leh. Bagan then ascended the throne, thus beginning the second dynasty, of whom the present ex.-ex. King is a descendant.

From now onwards, Ladak comes into conflict with peoples beyond her own borders. Although one Ladaki king had accepted the religion of Mahomet, the country remained faithful to Lamaistic Buddhism, whereas the neighbouring kingdom of Baltistan had been definitely converted to Moham-

medanism. Jamyang Namrgyal, the grandson of Bagan, King of Ladak, set out to enlarge his kingdom by attacking the buffer state between it and Baltistan, called Purig, of which Kargil is the capital. However, as he was too late in the year, he sustained defeat as much from snow as from the armies which opposed him, and as a result had to accept both the hand and the religion of the daughter of his Mohammedan conqueror. As the lady was beautiful, the accommodating lamas mitigated matters by discovering that Katun, their new queen, was a re-incarnation of the goddess, the "White Tara." The son of this union was, however, again a good Buddhist, and also went to war with Baltistan, but was unsuccessful. It was at about this time that the great Hemis Incarnation was invited to take up his abode in Ladak, and that the peculiar prayer-walls, of which we shall have more to say later, were introduced into the country. A third and successful war was also waged with the Baltis. But now begins the time of the decay and fall of the Western Tibetan Empire.

The quarrel between red and yellow lamas had now become acute in Tibet, and the yellow sect called in the King of Mongolia as their ally. He overran the whole country of Central Tibet, and then turned his eyes further afield, first letting them rest on Bhutan, with the result that, without waste of time, the King of Mongolia immediately attacked Ladak, slowly driving the army back to the fortress of Basgo. The ruins of this fort on the hill, where the Ladakis held out for three years are still to be seen. Being at the end of their resources, the Ladakis called in the help of the great Mogul King, Shah Jahan, who sent a large army to their assistance, and together they slowly drove the Mongolian invader back over the border. Shah Jahan made the Ladaki King accept the Mohammedan religion and leave one of his sons with him as a hostage. But hardly had his Kashmiri army retired from the country, when the Mongolians returned again and forced the poor old King of Ladak to sign another treaty,

promising to send tribute to Lhasa. Thus even to-day the anomaly exists that Ladak, though subject to the Maharajah of Kashmir, yet has to send a kind of tribute to Lhasa, of which more anon.

The final fall of the Western Tibetan Empire occurred about the year 1840, when the Sikhs with the help of the Rajah of Jammu had conquered Kashmir, and the latter, wishing to enlarge his borders sent his general, Sorowar, to conquer Ladak. It would take us too long to follow this general in all his campaigns ; suffice it to say he was uniformly successful in bringing the country into subjection as much by his wise statesmanship as by his good generalship.

Thus it comes about that Ladak and Baltistan have become dependencies of the Kashmir State, over which his Highness, the Maharajah, Sir Hari Singh, now rules. His interests here are looked after by the Wazir of Ladak, who spends the summer in Leh and the winter in Skardu, the capital of Baltistan, and may be regarded as the Kashmir Joint Commissioner, whereas his Majesty, the Emperor of India, is represented by the British Joint Commissioner, who spends about three months here in the summer, and the rest of the year resides in Srinagar as one of the assistants to the British Resident there. The chief duties of the latter are to look after things pertaining to the " Treaty Road " and to watch over the interests of foreigners in Ladak, whether they be Europeans, Yarkandis or Central Tibetans. During the absence of both these officials in winter, the highest authority in Leh is vested in the chief Magistrate or Tehsildar, whose Tehsil or area of jurisdiction extends as far as Botkharbu, where that of his colleague at Kargil begins. A third Tehsil also exists at Skardu. These Tehsildars are, of course, servants of the State of Kashmir, so also is the Naib (or Sub-Tehsildar). The State Dispensary with its Sub-Assistant Surgeon, the Telegraph office with its " Babu " in charge, are also State services, but the Post Office is Imperial, and the

Aksakal, who represents the British Government in assisting Yarkandi traders, and the "Charas Officer" in charge of the Indian hemp trade from Yarkand, both of the latter connected with the "Treaty Road," are also Imperial Government servants. These officials and sub-officials are prominent in the public life of Leh, taking their due precedence at public entertainments, and are all down-country men, mostly Punjabis and Kashmiris. We look for the day when there will be enough educated Ladakis to take up these positions in their own land.

CHAPTER III

Nature's Setting

IT has often been pointed out that the characteristics of a people are moulded by the country and climate in which they live. Certainly for stolidity and endurance the Ladakis resemble the massive mountains and everlasting hills among which are their dwellings. The "Doctor Sahib" once accompanied a seasoned Alpine climber with his two Swiss guides in an attempt to scale the highest peak in a range of mountains beyond the Indus, facing Leh. The expedition was unsuccessful owing to the inclement weather and the pressure of time, as the mountaineers were on their return to Europe, but they spent two memorable days at the edge of the glacier capping this great peak, at about 18,000 feet in a tumult of wind, thunder, lightning, hail and snow so fierce that the snow was actually driven through the canvas of the Sahibs' little tent. This just accommodated their two beds, and, for the sake of warmth and protection, they remained in these for thirty-six hours. The Swiss guides also had a small tent, but the Ladaki coolies, who had left the main caravan to accompany them, lay down in the snow, covered only with their own garments and apparently took no harm. In the bitter morning of mid-winter, with the thermometer at somewhere below Fahrenheit zero, our Ladaki nurse tells us how, coming through the bazar from her home, she has passed small boys sleeping out in front of the shops as watchmen. Right on the ground, possibly having pushed aside a little snow, with little or no covering

but their scanty garments, these small urchins spend the night with only a handful or two of barley-flour as a reward, but they call out a hearty greeting to our nurse as she passes, and neither spirit nor body appears to be chilled by the exposure.

We have already noticed the strange mixture of finery and rags, the incongruity of fine workmanship and adjacent tawdriness. Surely nature herself teaches them this odd combination of the sublime and the ridiculous. Think only of the many examples on the main road up from Srinagar to Leh. As one emerges from the narrow defile which has wound up slowly from Pashkim, just beyond Kargil, to the Mulbeck Valley and about three miles before the village of that name is reached, the gorge opens out into a broad cultivated valley with a great panorama of majestic mountains beyond. Here and there in the foreground are soft sandstone cliffs, behind, strange peaks with jagged pinnacles in their rugged outlines, rising higher yet sinking in perspective as they reach the horizon to stand out clear and sharp against the brilliant azure sky, the whole suggesting some gigantic upheaval of past ages. As one pursues the winding path in and out of soft red-brown sand-hills into the village, the nearer hills and the lower extraordinary formations of sandstone on the further side of the stream come into prominence. These are sculptured by wind, snow and rain into the most grotesque shapes, looking in some places like the ruins of some ancient village or even turretted castles, the rough outlines of the one-time windows presenting the most gnome-like suggestion of a forgotten civilization. In other places the stalagmite-looking relics are more statuesque, and, opposite the sharp turn of the highroad to the left, may be seen across the main valley a gigantic looking ruined model of a mother with a child at her knees. Over the pass and into the next village, again straggling along a wide valley, this formation is repeated, and one quaint little cluster of houses

on the further side of the stream appears to be purposely designed to show the evolution of the house from the rock. Holes in the cliff itself slowly evolve into the apertures of a dwelling, and these merge into the more elaborate windows of a house in a graded transition before one's eyes, whilst portions of the rock are used as walls and foundations for the buildings, so that it is quite hard to distinguish across the valley which is nature's building and which is man's. Even in the people this similitude to the land and rocks amounts to a protective adaptation like that in wild animals and birds. How difficult it is to distinguish the ordinary coolie seen on the road in the distance. His undyed home-spun, his cap and even his face (for his cheeks receive just about as much washing as the land receives rain in this dry climate) are thoroughly impregnated with the dry dust of the desert. His movements alone distinguish him from the grey-brown rocks, stones and sand around. Very different indeed is the red-robed lama, who can be discerned from afar in a land where the atmosphere is so rarefied that distance is incredibly fore-shortened. Again it is often absurdly difficult to know whether a pile of stones set up by some passer-by to frighten away mischievous spirits is a human being standing or sitting until one is quite near by, when the stones may suddenly resolve themselves into a wayfarer who rises to ask you for some *m'a-ches* (matches) which will enable him to light his fire so much more quickly than the flint and tinder which depend from his waist. On the road between Bot Kharbu and Lamayuru one of the most quaint little clusters of transitional rock-dwellings suddenly comes into view up a narrow ravine on one's left, and one thinks of the inhabitants, the women especially, whose life and world is probably confined to this fantastic corner, appropriately named Henasku. But all these fantasies are only preparations for the incredible scene that lies before one as the final corner is turned in the approach to Lamayuru.

The Photu La, a 13,400 feet pass, has just been crossed, at the top of which one seems to have had a bird's-eye view of a world of far-reaching mountain tops, so deserted of any sign of humanity that on looking upon this sea of mountains, one is reminded of Noah's dove who, having found "no rest for the sole of her foot," returned to the company of the Ark. So does one's eye return with a sense of common humanity and gratefulness to the unkempt, but triumphant ponymen of one's caravan, who, while their burdened steeds take breath after their exhausting climb, themselves pause to rest by the "Lhato" erected to mark the top of the pass. This structure is a collection of rocks and stones, supporting a crooked staff bearing some tags and rags with prayers inscribed on them, and with sundry marks of gratitude in the shape of old sheeps' and goats' horns, or best of all, a bit of yak's tail, thrown on to the pile. In the words *Sola*, *sola*, *sola*, the men express to the presiding genius of the pass their own relief and gratitude at once more having achieved the ascent, and then cheerfully start on the steep downward track. So it is with this majestic stretch of billowing mountains filling the mind that one proceeds on the way, and then rounds the last corner to see Lamayuru.

But who shall adequately describe this capital of Hobgoblin-land in its setting of purple hills, distant snow peaks, and brilliant blue sky? Running down towards the village, interspersed with "chorten" fat round structures, rather like gigantic pepperpots, are long "mani walls" built of stones and surmounted by two flattened sides, gently sloping up to meet each other, these tops being formed of flat stones covered with prayers. Nearer the village they end in arches, often with *chortens* on the top, under which the road may run. The village itself is built on the rocky hillside, here formed into strange fissures and crags, bridged by crazy-looking shelves, which the builders have utilized as well as the firmer foundations. It looks as if one shake would topple the whole absurd

structure on to the cultivated fields at the foot. Topping the hill and weirdest sight of all stands the monastery, with its flat roofs adorned at the corners with holy yak tails and prayer-flags. When staying at the rest-house at the edge of the fields below the village, the whole grotesque impression is especially enhanced in the evening, when the voices of the inhabitants going home from the day's work in the fields are loudly amplified owing to some strange acoustic relationship between the monastery hill and the one on the opposite side of the narrow valley. Moreover, as some of these stragglers ascend round the edge of the hill in the evening light, their silhouettes are also magnified, so that the whole atmosphere of this unparallelled and indescribable fortress of lamaism, makes the traveller rub his eyes in the endeavour to awake from such a fantastic dream. Before leaving this eerie wonderland there appears again a most extraordinary stalagmite formation of sandstone, as though whole cities had been tumbled out of the bowels of the earth, a veritable disruption of Sodom and Gomorrah after centuries of interment. After this, nature provides a scene of her wildest and most rugged grandeur. The road winds up and down the sides of a wonderful gorge, crossing several times the little stream, which gradually increases till it finally hurls itself into the Indus as a roaring torrent. All the way down the ravine, the road now climbs up far above the water, now descends close to it, but never leaves its noise, while the rocks provide a constant feast for the imagination, a succession of weird imagery, with variations in colour and shade, now fantastically suggestive, now boldly majestic, until at last the troubled waters are borne away by Mother Indus.

Thus does the grotesqueness of the land constantly manifest itself, so frequently emphasized by the human touch, as in these long prayer-walls, the longest of which, just outside Leh, stretches for half a mile across the desert, looking for all the world as though some giant children had been playing

trains in the sand, the *chortens* at both ends resembling clumsy engines, the lower one to give an extra push up the hill. Then there are the little piles of stones so often put up by lonely shepherds, or tired wayfarers, who have made their resting-places wherever a big rock will give them shade, these themselves in their sauciness looking more likely to attract evil sprites than repel them. Often on the tops of hills seen from the road side, but apparently on no beaten track, having simply invited attention because of their height or the suddenness, will be seen *lhatos* similar to those on the tops of passes.

Yet the strangeness of the land is after all but a minor aspect of these mountain uplands. The majesty of range after range of glistening peaks and shining glaciers in the regions of everlasting snow, their everchanging colour from morning to night, and from winter to summer, always new, always different, who shall tell of their never-failing inspiration, or of their picturesque parables? How can the wonderful autumn sunsets seen from Spitug close to the Indus in the valley five miles below Leh, be described? In a riot of crimson, the sun drops down behind the western gate of the valley, the gateway home for us of the far west, and leaves the mountains closing in the south-eastern gate, the way to the great closed land of Tibet, shrouded in mystery, while every possible shade of blue and purple and crimson and gold steal across the great ranges flanking each side of the long valley, and when to go out and wander along the green-turfed flats by the river is to go out to worship. Look at those rugged, jagged, cruel pinnacles of rock pointing upwards to the sky, as we ascend the Photila on the downward road to Kashmir. Do not their crude fingers remind us that even the difficult sorrow-filled times of our lives, have their directive function?

Living year in and year out in these valleys, bounded by their mighty ranges with their sense of mysteries guarded but capable of interpretation in some beautiful way infinitely

beyond our limited human ken, can we not feel with the child of A. B. Paterson's poem :—

"When people die
They go to the country over the range."

and say with this Australian poet :

"Ashes to ashes, and dust to dust:
Our views by a range are bounded too;
But we know that God has this gift in store,
That when we come to the final change,
We shall meet with our loved ones gone before
To the beautiful country over the range."

Then, too, there is such a joyousness in the land, between the long stretches of bare desert of rock and barren hill, which have their own beauty, especially when in an autumn setting of a blue-green river and an azure sky. Wherever a green village snuggles into the brown-red hillside, a rippling stream is heard and a cooling breeze felt in the little plantations of trees, whilst the soft evening light makes the green corn look like plush, or contrasts its autumn gold with the yellow glory of the poplars all set against a background of white snow peaks and blue sky. Nor must we omit the fairy touch of spring, which turns each nestling hamlet into a fairy-land of apricot blossom, exquisite prelude to the return of the green after the long, bare winter. Surely this joyousness gives our people their merry look, their cheerful willingness, and the happiness that bursts into song over every kind of work.

Was there ever a more striking example of the desert blossoming as a rose than is seen on the road between Shimshe Kharbu and Kargil, where in June and July the bushes are aflame with red and pink glory of wild rose, sometimes single as our English rose, sometimes double and varying from light pink to the deepest crimson, fit reward to the traveller who climbs the steep ascent and dares the precipitous paths that precede the flowery outburst. In some parts of Ladak bushes of yellow roses are to be found, having leaves scented like our

English sweetbriar. Nestling in the crevices between the hard bare rocks and stones of the same march, the beautiful fragile-looking columbine rears its dainty white bells, and among the driest patches of stone, especially in the neighbourhood of Kalatse, flowers of the somewhat cyclamen-like caper rejoice the eye. One of the most beautiful pictures lingering in the memory of a journey from Srinagar to Leh in June is provided by the little village of Tashgam, two-thirds of the way from Dras to Shimshe Kharbu. Here at the further end of the village by the side of the Dras river is a little green plantation of trees, the usual halting place for tiffin ; near it a bubbling brook runs down to join the river, and scattered about in its course are beautiful bushes of tamarisk, waving their prolific feathery blossoms in the breeze in a setting of green fields with scattered poplars, and framed like most Ladaki pictures, by the softly-graded lights and shades of the near hills, between and behind which peep the greater white peaks lined against the deep blue of a cloudless sky. In the summer-time the village walls, formed loosely of stones set together with mud, give a foothold to all sorts of little feathery plants, one resembling a wild maidenhair with wee brown flowers ; but of ferns there seems to be only one species, which enjoys those parts of the wall over which the water flows to the next terrace in the process of irrigation. Ice plants, such as we conserve in pots and rockeries at home, with their pinky white flowers abound, and the walls are often overgrown with a wild clematis which has the quaintest little brown flowers, surely turning into little elves and gnomes when no human is at hand. The edges of the fields and watercourses are adorned with yellow members of the ranunculaceæ, vetches, purple representatives of the scrophulariaceæ, species of milkwort, wild parsley and mint, and even dandelions. Belladonna is plentiful to the verge of nuisance in our gardens, and lucerne crops up everywhere. Edelweiss grows in broad patches over the lawns of the Leh Residency,

but Nature's most wonderful show is reserved, like the peoples' little box gardens, for the roof of her world. On the Zogi Pass which is the same altitude (11,500 feet) as Leh, in the summer months one of the outstanding features is the profusion and luxuriance of the flowers. One visitor to Ladak, re-crossing the pass in autumn, counted seventy different kinds as she rode along on her pony. At the foot of the high Kardong Pass behind Leh, at an elevation of between 15,000 to 16,000 feet, many of the same varieties grow, but they need and amply repay a little search there, as they have not the grassy sward of the Zogi, but must seek shelter among the stones. Here on these heights, to mention a few only, are found yellow Iceland poppies, Michaelmas daisies, small deep-blue gentians, forget-me-nots, forming a carpet of blue on the Zogi stretches, but replaced by the deep-blue of the borage below the Kardong, deep purple orchids, primulas in all shades of magenta and purple, cow parsley, a kind of stinging nettle, asters, saxifrage, vetches, Canterbury bells, and on the Zogi the single anemone and the tall bunched Japanese variety, even the green foxglove and the coarse edelweiss.

The highest trees in the land are poplars and two or three kinds of willows. A little lower in a few restricted spots are pencil cedars, as at Hemis Shukpachan ; these so-called " Shukpa " trees are holy, and their branches are made use of in religious rites. Donkey-loads are brought up to Leh a few weeks before Christmas for an annual religious festival, and the missionaries secure a load or two for making their own Christmas trees. The tree affording most grateful shade in Ladak, the Walnut, does not mature its fruit above Nurla, and apple-trees do not survive above the Basgo-Nyemo Valley, one march below Leh. Nor do apricots ripen much beyond stewing purposes in Leh, and our supplies are brought up from the lower villages. Wild currant bushes are sometimes seen in the lower valleys. Away on the bare hills one would

hardly credit any green growth at all, yet even here all sorts of little herbs and flowering thistles grow, each showing marked adaptation to its very dry habitat. Most important of these is the pungent-smelling, low-growing, bushy herb called *Burtsa*, which in the wildest places, far from habitation and cultivation, serves as fuel for man and food for beast.

Even now we have forgotten one of the most typical and best-known flowers in Ladak, the little stunted blue and white iris that springs up all along the water courses, and is the first flower to gladden our winter-weary eyes. Like most species up here, of plants and animals and even men, it exhibits the dwarfed mountain habit, and would look insignificant beside its handsome counterpart in Kashmir.

As regards the fauna of the country, we can better describe it under transport and shikar, for under those two headings we meet with nearly all the species which occur, but we might here add a few words about the birds of the country.

In the summer of 1923, Mr. B. B. Osmaston, a keen ornithologist visited Ladak, and made a list of sixty-seven different species of birds that he found in this country. Let it be noted that for many of these, the Ladaki has his own Tibetan name, showing that he is not only an observer, but a lover of nature. We have our residents, and our summer and winter visitors. That the latter should find even Leh too warm in the summer is surprising. Let us begin with our residents. Of the crows and ravens, our friendly scavengers, to whom should be added the noisy magpies with their constant "cha, cha, cha, cha, cha, cha," we have already spoken, but we must not forget the chough with its red or yellow bill, who in the early spring builds his nest in the sandy cliff near Leh, while pigeons (Rock and Blue Hill) abound. Smaller birds on the whole, find the rigours of winter too severe, and many of them leave us, their places being taken by others, who descend from the higher regions. The sparrow we have always with us, and he is kept company by

the little Grey Tit in his beautiful grey coat and black waistcoat and cap. We are not sure about the Dipper in his evening dress suit, nor the Crag Martin, but believe that both manage to hold out through the coldest months. The hardy Mountain Finches (Adams' and Brandt's), however, do not even come down from the neighbouring heights, where they manage somehow to find food all the winter, although quite a number of birds from the higher uplands visit us during the cold months. The Eagle and the Vulture, finding too much snow on the mountains, come down to obtain their food, leaving us in the Spring to make room for Hawk, Kite and Kestrel. The little Robin Accentor, with his dull red breast, also finds the mountains, his summer residence, too cold. When the down-country Rosefinch, the Common Redstart and the Field and Desert Larks leave us in the autumn, their half-brothers, Seventzov's Rose Finch, Guldenstadt's Redstart and Elwes' Horned Larks come to represent their families. Most of our Desert Chats leave us in spring, only a few staying behind to build a nest here and there in the deserts round Leh. The winter also provides excellent shooting for the sportsman. Besides the ducks, Mallard, Tufted Pochard, Ruddy Shelldrake, and Common Teal (to mention only a few), and Snipe, which can be found in all the swampy little rivulets, the mountains and hills will provide Chikor (the partridge so common in India) for his gun and his pot, whilst nearer Tibet, the Tibetan Sandgrouse can be obtained. If he wants pheasants, these, too, are represented up on the snows by the Tibetan or Himalayan Snow Cock, who draw immediate attention to themselves by their peculiar and shrill whistle which so rapidly ascends the scale. How sorry we are to lose the company of these in the spring, for not only does this spell the end of happy days in their company with a gun, but a return to the everlasting mutton, living as we do in a State over which a Hindu Maharajah rules. This too, however, has its compensation for now our summer

migrants appear. First of all the Wagtails come (Hodgson's pied ; grey and yellow-headed), making the streams and rivulets bright with their graceful movements and undulating flight, soon to be followed by the Siberian Chiffchaff, with his monotonous " cheep, cheep, cheep, cheep," The common Redstart, too, is here now, whilst the Hoopoo calls his " Ooppoopppoopp " (the Ladaki name for him) to the farmer, giving him permission to sow his fields, unafraid of serious harm to his crops from further cold. The Cuckoo, too, makes his song heard occasionally about this time, and now one can notice the Western Blue Rock Thrush, whose coat really does look a beautiful slaty blue as he sits in the sun. Above the river, Gulls and Tern wheel and sweep, and are kept company by Swift and Martin ; on the stones by its side, the Ibisbill finds his food, whilst the royal Heron meditates solemnly by the water's edge with his neck well tucked in. So we can boast of a varied ornithology, full of interest and change.

We have already made so many references to climate and altitude that the reader will have gathered a fair idea of both. The extremes of the climate may be summed up in the oft-told saying that if you sit in the shade of a rock, the part of your body within the shadow freezes, while that in the sunshine boils ! The heat of summer out in the desert is intense, for the long stretches of sand and the barren glaring rocks seem both to soak up sunshine and reflect it back as it pours out of a sky which is so often cloudless. Yet in the shade of rocks and trees and in the ordinary life in and about a house, it is never oppressive, and there are few summer evenings in Leh when an extra wrap is not needed. The short summer from June to mid-September sees the ripening of the wheat, barley and lucerne crops, the coarse grained barley being the more important source of food, and growing up to altitudes of over 14,000 feet. In the lower warmer villages the summer is longer, and a second crop may be raised. All this cultivation is entirely kept alive by irrigation,

dependent on the melting of the winter snows, so that the stream from the Kardong which waters Leh is completely used up, and never reaches the Indus bed ; the average two inches of rain-fall is almost negligible. Although at such an altitude, the snowfall of Leh is also not severe, the snows exhausting themselves on the surrounding ranges, and it rarely exceeds two inches on the ground at a time. It seems to evaporate without any intermediate slushy stage and a sunny winter is quite pleasant owing to the dryness of the cold. It is even quite enjoyable to sit out-of-doors in the sunshine during the day time. Though the temperature may go down to minus ten degrees F. in mid-winter, and remain by day at about ten degrees below freezing point in a room without a fire, its dryness makes it much more bearable than a less cold, but damper climate, and for a similar reason the heat is much less oppressive than that in India, perspiration being hardly perceptible owing to swift evaporation. The spring, however, is heralded by bitter piercing winds, and often they raise little spiral hurricanes of dust seen chasing across the valley from afar, but woe if one of these " sand-devils " blows across your garden and catches up your verandah chairs in its wake or fills your room with dust.

The further effects of altitude and climate on the human beings, indigenous and foreign, who dwell in the land, need not be dealt with here, but when all is said, the flame of life on the whole burns brightly in this land of clear skies and bright sunshine.

CHAPTER IV

Over the Zogi Pass

THE road between Leh and Srinagar, the summer capital of the Maharajah of Kashmir, and a popular hill station for the white man, is one of the chief highways to Central Asia, bearing its trade to and from India.

No wonder that one of the meanings attributed to the Zogi La, the dread pass that closes this road in winter, is the place of four meetings, for the roads from Tibet, Yarkand, Baltistan and Kashmir all converge here.

This road has been described by so many travellers, that it would be redundant to add another detailed account of the journey up to Leh. Suffice it to mention some of the outstanding features and incidents that have impressed themselves on one who has traversed it several times, and for whom most of its turns and corners bring to memory an additional reminiscence. The lower or Kashmir side of the pass includes the first stage to Ganderbal which is generally accomplished either by motor, for a car may go even another five to six miles to the Suspension Bridge which spans the Sindh, or by boat down the Mar Canal and across the Anchar Lake when there is enough water, otherwise taking an extra night and going down the river Jhelum to its meeting place or "wedding" with the Sindh river at Shadipur and then up to Ganderbal. Having once effected a junction with the Sindh, the marches from Ganderbal onwards lead directly up the Sindh river to the foot of the Zogi La. This valley is known to so many thou-

sands of summer tourists in the " Happy Valley " of Kashmir, and does not properly belong to our land at all, so we will leave it for others to describe. Its foaming river and beautiful forested hills, are perhaps seen at their best the latter half of May, when the fresh green of the early summer contrasts so vividly with the evergreen of pines and deodar. The snows then are low on the hills, and the glistening giant peaks peering over the forested edges of their humbler brethren are outlined against a blue sky flecked with soft white clouds, the air is still balmy, and the busy rushing torrent so often skirting the road not quite so thunderous as when the summer sun has brought the melted snows to swell it to a roaring river. This certainly is the most joyous time to travel upwards, though the wonderful autumn tints challenge any comparison with their own beauty, when the winter frost in the high sources of the river is already checking its flow, and the mad rush of melted snow gives place to a quiet flow of clear blue water. The summer heat is then over, but the chill in the air gives its presage of winter cold and bareness. So let us start in May, leave the early summer in Kashmir, already warm as an English mid-summer, and travel upwards towards the spring again, reaching Sonamerg, a favourite camping resort, the last week of that month, and wondering what awaits us on the Zogi, whither a mild winter and the news of an early opening have lured us, possibly, too soon. The crossing we now have in mind, perhaps the earliest in the year we have experienced, was accomplished together with Colonel Theodore and Mr. Kermit Roosevelt, sons of the famous President, who were travelling up with two other American gentlemen into Chinese Turkestan on a big game shooting and scientific expedition. With ourselves were two ladies, but this time no children, as one had gone home to school, and the other, together with her Tibetan nurse, had to be left temporarily with doctor friends in Kashmir, as her health would not stand a return to the altitude of Leh. Looking ahead we could see

the Sindh valley narrowing and just make out the snow-covered crest of a mountain which barred its upper end and indicated the site of the pass, about which we must say a few words.

The name Zogi La has another meaning attributed to it by the Tibetan, as well as the one just alleged, one which indicates the terrors that abound when winter holds it in its icy grip, namely the place of four demons. It is a pass of 11,500 feet, which separates Kashmir and what to many represents civilization, from the wild uplands of the Himalayas and the mysteries of the "distant morning lands" of Central Asia. Though its altitude is not very high for a pass, only equalling that of Leh, its difficulties are great. The summer road should be open from 15th May to 15th November, for on those dates the rates of transport alter from the high winter ones indicating coolie porterage only, to the lower summer ones of pony transport. In winter the difficulties are often insuperable owing to soft snow, blizzards and biting winds, and often the mails are delayed two or three weeks before the runners dare attempt the crossing, the telegraph wires themselves not infrequently breaking with the weight of snow. Traffic is at a standstill from mid-December to early March, save for adventurous travellers who, even then, it is stated, get themselves carried over in baskets on the backs of coolies, sturdy inhabitants of the villages bordering the Ladak side of the pass. In the centre of the Zogi La is a rest-house, often up to the eaves in snow, called Machoi, situated on the top of a small sharp hill, one side of which is sheltered from the prevailing winds, and has two or three small buildings, a serai and a telegraph office nestling under it. The telegraph master must have a dreary time in winter, and in the middle of May is moved to another post higher up on the road to Leh. The winter of 1924–5 was exceptionally mild and very little snow fell on the pass. April in Kashmir was a very hot month, more like June, and it was expected that the pass

would open earlier than usual. However, the weather broke again, and three or four weeks of thunderstorms and heavy rains both lowered the temperature and raised apprehensions as to the new snow which must lie on the pass, and we waited with some anxiety at Sonamerg for news of the road. Having greeted the Roosevelt party as they passed through on their way to the foot of the pass, and exchanged opinions as to its condition over a cup of tea in a tent open both ends to a glorious view of snow peaks and pine-covered hills, we settled down for a second night at Sonamerg expecting them to ascend the pass early next morning. We were in great hopes that their large caravan of 60 ponies would tramp out a good track for ourselves, and indeed open the summer road, which we heard had been mended that day and was ready for use. But, alas, mid-day brought clouds and the afternoon a gale followed by rain which continued all night, and we wondered if they had been able to push on, as this meant fresh snow on the pass. The morning was clear and fine, and then a few fresh clouds gave their showers, but again the sky cleared, and the early afternoon saw us on our way to Baltal, a charming halting place at the foot of the pass. As we neared it the noise of avalanches two or three times called our attention to the falling snows, but the sky was now cloudless, and the evening extraordinarily beautiful. We rode along the nine miles of valley and arrived at the rest-house to find our fellow travellers having tea, to which they invited us, in front of the bungalow with its beautiful surroundings, which increased in loveliness as the soft rays of evening played on the long vistas. We had indeed got back into spring, for the trees had hardly donned their fresh new dresses, and patches of short purple irises, frittilarias, primulas and other fascinating early flowers were peeping out of the grass all around. To-morrow we were to go back still further into winter snows, and pass over into the land of bare hills and scarce trees. After tea, Mr. Cherrie, the ornithologist of the expedition and

Colonel Roosevelt retired into the bungalow to continue their work of skinning and preparing birds, of which Mr. Cherrie had succeeded in getting twenty-two specimens in Baltal, and wanted to get them ready to pack before dark. The rest of the bungalow with its two main rooms and verandah was full of luggage under shelter. Our own camp soon went up, and both parties dined early out-of-doors, so as to be ready for an early start in the morning. If only we could get off while the snow was still frozen and before the hot sun softened the surface, how much easier the going would be. We arranged together that the Roosevelts should make a start at five a.m. and ourselves follow in their tracks at five-fifteen. The four members of the expedition slept in their small but serviceable little brown tents, bedding on the ground being much the warmest and best for these high uplands, and soon after dusk there was silence in both camps. Our own, depending on an alarum clock, which failed, rose an hour late to see our neighbours just before five a.m. finishing their breakfast at their out-of-doors table by the light of a candle lantern. However, we need none of us have made such efforts, for, alas, as is usual at this halt, the ponymen let us down. The grass round Baltal is poisonous, and ponies who eat it unwittingly become seriously ill, so overnight the owners of the hired transport drive their steeds away to the hills to graze, and have difficulty in finding and collecting them in the morning. Thus both camps had to wait about when all was packed up and ready to load. The Roosevelts had a fire of logs, which are easily collected in the vicinity, burning merrily, and we were all glad to warm our feet in the cold morning air as we waited. At last, past six o'clock, the bulk of the pack ponies were off, but some still had not been found. Two of our own riding ponies, which we discovered soon after we started, were grazing up towards the pass, while their owner had gone to look for them in the opposite direction, and one or two of the Roosevelt's pack ponies, for which Mr. Kermit Roosevelt waited by his

DEDICATION OF A NEW MANI WÁLL.

At each end are *chortens*.

A MONASTIC BAND.

One small lay child supports the ends of two long shawms.

A GREETING.

Women who have come out to greet the British Joint Commissioner with flour, water, chang (local beer) and fire. To the right a "band" of welcome is provided by one gentleman!

fire, were also late. A stalwart figure he looked, ready to brave the elements in his solar topi, serviceable khaki shorts, leather waiscoat and short khaki coat with interesting bulges round the bottom which apparently was double so as to form a continuous pocket all round. He soon caught up his caravan, climbing the steep side of the valley, while we all wound up the zigzag summer road, a broad path cut high up in the side of the cliff. It was not under snow in the steep part of the ascent, though as it rounded a big bay there were two avalanches to cross by a narrow track ; these always persist well into the summer. At the top of this steep ascent we came upon continuous snow, and our difficulties began. There was a big hold-up while coolies with spades dug a path across an avalanche which had been re-covered with fresh snow. It led down a short steep descent to the main valley, where the winter road up the central gorge joined the summer one. Huddled in the middle of a long line of ponies on the narrow snow track, with a precipice on one side sloping down to the valley, we could see ahead first one of the expeditionary sahibs with one or two servants, behind them their empty riding ponies, while further back the laden animals slowly began to flounder down the improvised path over the avalanche to the main valley. Some got on fairly well, others plunged about, one rolled over and his pack after him, but at the bottom seemed none the worse for his fall. In the valley again we tried to go ahead, but there were long waits while the four sahibs in the front made a track. At last we seemed to get a move on, unable, of course, as yet to ride, for by now the sun was quite warm, and the surface snow very soft. A little further on we passed a poor empty riding pony in trouble, for it had eaten the poisonous grass at Baltal and was grievously ill, in fact the unhappy beast had only been dragged up the steep ascent to die at the top, and had given up its life before we had all passed. In this sort of travelling each wayfarer must get on as best he can, and one passes and is passed

according to the exigencies of the road, so that from time to time one's fellow travellers vary. In this way, the Doctor Memsahib, who was riding their well-known old pony, a sturdy white Zankskari who had been with the missionaries of Leh some thirty years and served them well in return for the care he had received from his babyhood, got ahead of the rest of the party, with one of their servants, and was able to ride every now and then, for Dromar is a wonderful old pony in the snow, and the more difficult the road, the more he raises his head and steps out to overcome the difficulty. Dismounting every now and again to let him be led swiftly alongside over the trackless soft snow, so as to get in front of another batch of slow-going laden ponies, then up again for a space over the trodden-out track till another lot of burdened toilers were passed, she soon got ahead. Here and there the laden animals sank very deeply, sometimes the snow lay on thin ice which would not bear the ponies' weight, and in they went to the shoulders, occasionally leaving their packs on the top of the snow. Even in walking one not infrequently stumbled into some softer underlayer and became wet to above the knees. Presently we came to a narrow ford, with the expeditionary sahibs waiting at the other side, and Mr. Cutting, their Cinema man, poised with his camera to catch the pack ponies as they floundered off the snow bank into the little stream and clambered up the ice and snow on its further edge. This ford seemed merely to add to Dromar's enjoyment, bringing, who knows, what reminiscences of high pass and mountain stream in his long life of faithful service. Somewhere about here we noted a telegraph wire sagging right down under the snow, no doubt broken by its weight. A little further on was a small hut, just a rude shelter of roof and wall. Here again the American Sahibs were waiting and looking back to see how their caravan was coming, and their care for their pack animals was again demonstrated, when, having crossed a snow bridge over the main stream of the

watershed, now running in the opposite direction, the Doctor Memsahib came upon the party sitting on a ridge of bare earth and stones, which had thrust out from the surrounding snow, where it was more exposed to the sun and less could have settled. They explained that they did not like the look of that snow bridge and were waiting to see if it would stand the strain of pack animals, meanwhile cogitating where best to make a track down and across the stream should it show signs of giving. The Doctor Sahib and the other two ladies reached this spot just when the owner of the dead riding pony came up, howling with all his might, less for the fate of his animal than for the compensation he hoped to get by the compassion his noise inspired. The road soon re-crossed over a stronger snow bridge to the original side. About a mile beyond this round a corner came the welcome sight of the Machoi Bungalow, perched on its little hill athwart the valley, and with its proximal slope free of snow and showing the serais and other buildings offering their shelter. Dromar stepped from the heavy snow-path on to this terra firma with much vim, and ascended the hill with great zest as though only beginning his day's work. The Memsahib soon got the caretaker to unlock the bungalow, threw off wet boots and stockings, put them to dry in the sun, and in its warmth sat looking back and watching the long train of animals slowly moving over the snow, the black spots on the vast expanse of white like a veritable train of ants. The Doctor's party did not attempt to go further that day, but the Roosevelts waited a little in the vicinity till all their caravan had caught up, and then proceeded about two miles further, where the small plateau on the beginning of which Machoi stands again descends steeply to the main valley. On this descent also there was practically no snow, and they were able to pitch their tents while their ponies sought what grazing they could on the bare slope. But besides their sixty ponies and our twenty, another small caravan was crossing the pass that day,

belonging to the Rajah of Khaplu, a gentleman distinguished by the title of "Jo," who was bringing his family home after the winter in Srinagar. His twelve ponies and those of some odd traders who had joined the procession brought the number of animals to well over one hundred, so that the long string of black ants on that white snow was a picture worth remembering. The Jo Sahib had a son about fifteen, one younger, a little girl of two, and his wife travelling with him. The latter being a purdah Mussulman lady, was conveyed in a dandy closed by curtains and carried by four coolies, changed at intervals. How this lady had endured the gyrations of her carriage as it swung about in every angle and in every plane, when first one and then another coolie stumbled and floundered in and out of the soft snow and up and down the rough road, it is hard to imagine. It would seem preferable to be carried on someone's back like the wee girl, and at least see the meaning of such alarming movements. But worse still was to come, at least to our Western minds. For when the traders brought up the rear of the procession, a pony was seen stumbling along with its usual pack burdens on each side, but sprawled across the top between them on her abdomen, face forwards, stockinged feet behind, her head covered with the usual *burkha*, and secured by a rope with the rest of the load, was a Yarkandi woman. Peeping through the eyelets of her headdress she could see all that was coming, and tied down as she was, must remain helpless, swaying with the rest of the pack in response to every stagger and stumble of her pony. Typical it seemed to Western eyes, of the place to which woman is too often relegated in these lands—a necessary, but onerous part of the baggage.

CHAPTER V

Into Ladak

AT daybreak next morning we were off again. On the whole there was less snow on this side of the pass, and by about six a.m. we reached the Roosevelt's camping ground on the hillside, the front of their caravan just debouching down the valley, those in the rear still standing about in groups, as their loads were fastened on. Ahead of all could be seen the sun-helmeted figures of the four sahibs. The stretch of road now to be covered brought vividly to the Doctor Memsahib's mind the last time she travelled upwards over it. That year the winter snow had been excessive and though the Zogi was not crossed till the middle of June there were still long stretches completely covered with it. To grown-ups this would have been no obstacle but we had with us then our two children, Helen the elder being five, and Josephine the younger not seven months. The former rode a pony, and, having no khud sense at all, was perfectly happy save when fatigue overtook her. The wee mite was carried in a wicker cot with a pole which the coolies swung on their shoulders passing under wicker loops attached below the roof. In this nest she slept serenely, and, even when her blue eyes opened on the white world around, she was blissfully unconscious of all danger. It was the mother who was all too susceptible to every difficulty, potential as well as real. When one of the coolies slipped in the track on the steep hillside sloping acutely down to the rushing river below, and the little cot swayed dizzily

for a moment, it was she who caught her breath in dread suspense; but there was always another figure in attendance who was quick to give an extra hand. This was Choskyit, the children's Ladaki nurse, a faithful, delightful woman, and a picturesque lady as she rode along in her dark plum-coloured, full-skirted Ladaki home-spun, with a fur-lined waistcoat fastened on the shoulder in Tibetan style, and her red velvet Ladaki hat turned up at the back and sides, showing the black lamb-skin lining. Large round hoops of seed pearls with a few small turquoises and red stones adorned her ears and framed her kind cheerful face, which gave the lie to the rather barbarous leather horsewhip she carried. Riding behind her baby's dandy, scolding the men roundly when they carried it crookedly or loitered, she was off her pony in a minute to lend her aid in any time of need, to adjust the curtain to a change in the direction of the sun at a turn in the road, or to see that the little one was comfortable and happy. So trustworthy was she that she and the baby were always sent off first in the early morning, the parents catching up before the stop for the roadside meal. And now again the Memsahib had reached the piece of road where the track led over the frozen ice and snow, undermined by the rushing river, so that every now and then it ended abruptly where another large piece had cracked off the bank and remained tilted up at an acute angle into the river. At such places a new path was beginning to be trodden out further up the hillside, but, when it joined the old one again, one wondered how long before any new piece would in turn yield to the pressure; whether perhaps one's own pony would prove to be "the last straw," and pony and rider suddenly find themselves taking a sideways somersault into the river. However, the baby was now safely in Srinagar, so there were no fears for her, and such dangers as the road presented merely acted as thrills to the grown-up mentality. Again Dromar went ahead and his rider found herself in the company of the head cook of the expedition. Going along

together with his help every now and then to hold the stirrup for remounting after a nasty bit, and conferring with him as to the track advisable to pursue when the path suddenly broke off into the now increasing river, they conducted such conversation as the Memsahib's limited Hindustani would allow. So over snow and stream we journeyed, then, coming at last to an open plain free from snow, where Dromar could indulge in his favourite amble, we parted like "ships that pass in the night."

It was on this part of the pass that we distinguished the call of some of its inhabitants. Not only the shrill cry of the marmot was heard in the stillness of this wilderness of bare stone and rock peeping out of the patches of snow a silence only broken by the rushing stream, but even the spring call of the cuckoo came frequently across the clear air, while nearer Matayan the song of the soaring lark trilling in exquisite joyousness, floated on the air. The song of the cuckoo recalled a previous crossing in mid June of another year, with late snow, but far less than at this time, for just about the same place its call was heard, and could be traced to one pathetically lonely tree up on the hillside. Here also at a bend in the river, which was a fierce, wide, rushing torrent by June, a zo, the hybrid between the yak and the cow, was seen struggling in the water. We thought it had arrived there by a mishap, but were surprised to be forced to the conclusion that it was purposive, for, steering a calculated course very slantingly across the tremendous current, it ultimately was deposited on the other side, got out, shook itself, and walked calmly on to seek pasture, as though such an immersion were a daily occurrence.

Dromar soon overtook the walking expeditionary sahibs, and, as on the previous day, drew up at the head of the whole procession at Matayan Rest-house, the pass with all its dangers and difficulties now well behind. One pleasing ceremony was missing at this snowy crossing. It is usual when a white

man crosses the pass for the first time, for the ponymen to present him as he nears the rest-house with a little posy of flowers, which he is supposed to acknowledge with the usual rupee, an exchange of mutual compliment and congratulation on the safe accomplishment of the crossing of man and beast, but with the pass covered in its white mantle, there was too much concern for real safety to attend to this little ritual, even had Nature been able to prepare her spring favours. It was amusing to recollect how on coming down from Leh one August with their five-and-a-half months' baby who had been born up there, the Doctor and his wife had paid toll for the infant's first crossing though they themselves were exempt. On this second day several of the travellers suffered with sore eyes, and a bottle of eye lotion which the Doctor Memsahib happened to have with her was in great request. Two or three natives were passed, heads directed downwards, one with a precious umbrella, another even holding an end of his puggaree across his painful eyes. One of our party had a severely inflamed eye in spite even of glasses and veil, and this snow blindness is extremely painful. Among the patients was the elder son of the Rajah of Khaplu, who was found with his family at Matayan, and, although we arrived there at just after nine a.m., they had not started off on the next march, Matayan being the full stage from Baltal which they had actually achieved the previous day. The Doctor Memsahib went in to see the purdah lady and found her perfectly composed and cheerful and ready for her next bumping. Meanwhile the Roosevelt party had passed on to Dras, twelve miles further, having only come four or five miles from their camping place. The Doctor's party stopped to lunch or rather "brunch" (for this roadside meal is usually a combination of breakfast and lunch) on the bungalow verandah, and, when the ponymen came up, they said they would prefer to go on to Dras rather than stay the night at Matayan, as there is no pony fodder there. So we took to the road again,

the snow having now receded to the distant hills and left our path clear, and by about three p.m. reached Dras.

But we must not, in all fairness to the Zogi, leave it as though its presiding demons always held sway. In the three months of July, August and September, this dreaded road loses all its difficulties and is transformed into one of nature's most beautiful flower gardens. A visitor to Leh re-crossing it at the end of August describes it as follows : " The Zogi on our return journey was one vast flower garden and rockery, impossible in its wealth of beauty to describe. From my pony's back, I counted seventy different wild flowers crossing the Zogi La alone. There were carpets of edelweiss and blue gentian, mauve daisies, yellow ragwort, pink ' coralflower ' and rich purple pelargonium. The whole hillside in one part would be sky blue with a sheet of forget-me-nots, further beyond the rich verdure of the grass there would be a mass of pink or mauve where the flower grew in rich profusion."* After the bare hills of Ladak, the green slopes are extraordinarily verdant, and large flocks of sheep and goats are brought up here from the Plains in summer to pasture. We were particularly interested, one August, when stopping for the night at Machoi on our way down, to notice one of these enormous flocks pass near the rest-house in single file. One after another they came in unceasing procession, over one thousand of them, tall Kashmiri goats with their look of foolish fearfulness ludicrously mixed with the patriarchal solemnity lent by their tufted beards, all of them so expressive, and many with irrisistibly humorous resemblances to one's human acquaintances, sheep of all sorts, mothers bleating and young ones following: it seemed as if they would never end. Fortunately for us their shepherds had set up a little camp quite near us at the foot of the great glacier behind Machoi, and we were able to procure a little fresh goat's milk from them instead of resorting to tins. With the words and tune of the

* *Tales of Tirah and Lesser Tibet.* Mrs. Lilian Starr.

song "The Lord God planted a garden" running in the writer's ears, the following adaptation evolved in response to the surrounding scenery :

Song of the Zogi La

The Lord God planted a garden,
  Up here on the roof of the world,
Where in winter the snow was warden,
  And the wild winds swept and whirled.
So near to the gates of heaven,
  Its Gardener lived in the sky,
And colour and fragrance blended
  To gladden the passer-by.

And there on the verdant hillside
Were pastures clean and sweet,
  Tucked in with fleecy cloudlets
Where sky and hilltop meet.
  And many a glistening glacier
Gave birth to a shining stream
  That bore the life-giving water
To where the great rivers gleam.

CHAPTER VI

Back to Lamaland

AT Matayan we have really crossed the Zogi, but it is at Dras that we change our transport, and see the last of the steeds and their syces (grooms) who have brought us over. The former place consists of a few huts, a serai (caravanserai) and a bungalow, in a desolate wind-swept spot with practically no supplies accessible. Probably owing to wind and weather the traveller is here left to his own resources, with the result that several visitors have launched into poetry, of which there is an amusing collection of rhymes in the bungalow book. The rest-house has two small rooms with well-boarded windows and a limited verandah with a windscreened corner. Here the Memsahib has recollections of a real pressure of accommodation. Travelling down from Leh to send her elder child off home to school, and to try the effect of the lower altitude on the ill-health of her little one of two-and-a-half, an awkward incident occurred between Dras and Matayan, for one of the zos carrying luggage fell down the khud, and his load rolled on into the stream. The locks of a suitcase were broken on the boulders, and away floated all the baby's warm clothes for the return journey and daintier ones for the civilization of Srinagar, and also all the contents of a sewing basket, whose empty case remained in position in the crown of a hat, not a nice quandary to be left in with two children, and no needle or cotton, so far out in the wilds! A yakdan, with all the Memsahib's civilized clothes, shoes, books and incidentally money—was also

brought out of the river broken and sopped through, but with all the contents intact. A little beyond the scene of the accident, news of which reached us at our roadside meal, we met over thirty ponies, the advance half of a caravan belonging to a party of seven Swedish missionaries who we knew were on the way up, bound for Yarkand, a month's journey beyond Leh. Since the Great War the members of this Mission have had to reach their posts by a three months' journey through India and over the Karakorums, whereas in times of peace it had taken them only three weeks to travel *via* Russia and the Transiberian railway. Now they could only get to and fro in early autumn, over roads and passes compared with which the Leh-Srinagar road is a promenade, yet in one year these heroic folk brought two babies under a year old through Leh, one travelling in each direction. We inquired from the ponymen where the sahibs were stopping, and they replied Machoi, so as soon as we reached Matayan we established ourselves literally all over the room, for the wet goods salvaged from the water were taken out and spread over every available shelf, peg, and article of furniture, as well as weighted down on the hot stones out in the sun and wind.

The other room of the bungalow was occupied by a Yarkandi lady and her family who were travelling down with us. This lady's husband had been Aksakal (a kind of minor Consul) for the British Government in Leh, but was now a trader. She was suffering from an abdominal tumour, for which she had steadily refused surgical interference until it was much too large to risk removal in the altitude of Leh, where collapse after such operations so often occurs. When at last her husband returned from a long trading visit to Yarkand, they were at length persuaded to come down to Srinagar under the Doctor Memsahib's wing, their two boys travelling with them, so that she might take her only remaining chance of life. The lady had been almost moribund in Leh, but with careful treatment and plenty of fresh air after years

of purdah, when her roof or enclosed court-yard afforded the only resort for outdoor exercise, she so much improved that she arrived in Kashmir a different woman, having covered the miles mostly in a dandy but often astride on their own quiet horse. Here she was operated upon in the Zenana Mission Hospital by women surgeons, and a tumour weighing twenty-four pounds removed. She made such an uninterrupted recovery that she was able to return to Leh with her family before the winter closed the pass.

But to come back to Matayan, we had just finished spreading our things out to dry, and were beginning tea, when the seven missionaries bound for Yarkand arrived. In the evening, they found the wind too strong and the ground too dry and hard to hold their tent pegs, so eventually two of their ladies slept in a small room with the two children and their Ladaki nurse, the other two and the Doctor Memsahib and two gentlemen, on the small verandah, while a third gentleman, seized with a bad attack of malaria, had to suffer his high fever and rigors in the bathroom. Such is life on the road !

On the upward journey the path descends from Matayan by the side of the river, as it rushes off the Zogi, and trees have now been left behind, but the hills and rocks are very beautiful and the vegetation and flowers of great interest. In the village of Pandras, just across the first bridge, one is introduced to the gnomish dwellings and weird unkempt inhabitants of Ladak, though we are not in Buddhist country yet, but in the intermediate Mussulman province of Purig, where a mixed race of Ladakis and Baltis live. Passing down the gorge the only shelter for our roadside meal is a big rock on the right, near a waterfall tumbling over the cliff on the left, and on a hot day to sit under it is really to experience " the shadow of a mighty rock within a weary land."

The Dras bungalow is also famed for wind-and generally much abused, but we have always been glad to spread out in its many little rooms, and especially to enjoy a bath in the

delightful little streamlets that come gurgling from the valley behind. Sad to say this naughty stream carried off the false teeth of a friend of ours on one occasion, so ablutions in its waters should be accomplished with care. Even this bungalow's accommodation was well taxed when the Doctor Memsahib came through with her children, and found a party there on their way down from Leh, with one gentleman suffering badly from altitude collapse, and a cook who was supposed to be taking drugs. Presently a third patient came up from a camp near-by whose history, past and present, like another famous person's, seemed to include every disease except housemaid's knee, and who certainly was the last sort of woman who should have attempted such a journey for pleasure.

The march from Dras to Shimshe Kharbu is one of the longest, and a pleasant memory comes of a lazy morning at the bungalow, and, after an early tea, a ride down the long sloping plain with its green fields and sparse clumps of trees, the soft lights of evening playing round the nearer green hills and the further bare or snowy ones. It was on this stretch of cultivation that a loose pony once suddenly rushed up and wantonly tried to bite our famous old Dromar with no provocation whatever. The latter's rider much regretted he had no whip in his hand, for Dromar needed no urging himself. Our evening ride brought us into camp at Dundeltang, a small riverside *bagh*, opposite a mighty glacier. Round a corner a mile or so beyond this was a precipitous bit of path where a luggage pony was edged over by his stronger brethren, whilst their guardians stopped to drink at a spring in the rock, and all curios collected in Ladak by the owner of the load, and his change of clothes, were drowned with it. Far more terrible was the tragedy which occurred at Dundeltang some years later, when a young American, travelling to Leh with friends, left his tent for an early morning stroll by the river, and was never seen alive again. His disappearance remained a com-

plete mystery until his body was found some weeks later about thirty miles further down the river, after its junction with the Suru.

But let us get on to that beautiful little stopping place where we have our tiffin at the further end of Tashgam village, still by the river, which we have with us through the whole of this march. Here in June is that fairy-land of waving blossom to which we have already referred, its bushes dotted about the course of a tumbling stream, with a few tall poplars, standing up against the blue sky, and a background of great brown mountains relieved by a glistening glacier. Crossing a rough little bridge, or wading through the stream, we shall find a cool *bagh* awaiting us, with the river near enough to rejoice, but not disturb us. A little way beyond we cross another bridge over a very strongly rushing, angry bit of river, and just over it, with the path levelled on a precipitous cliff above the tumultuous waters, and the ground steeply rising above its inner side, we remember the thoughtlessness of some "zos," grazing on the almost bare hillside above the path, who, as they moved, loosened large stones which arrived in our vicinity, much to our ponies' alarm.

The next bungalow at Shimshe Kharbu is a nice roomy one. The river rushes along below a deep precipice on the left, though not too steep for us to find a way down to a delightful side-pool, inviting a dip in the cold invigorating water. The slope of the river-bed is so marked, and the rush of water so tremendous, that at night its very noise is apt to keep one awake. The cook-houses are opposite the bungalow and at right angles with it, and, when sitting, on the verandah, one's eyes are fascinated by the goblin-like expression of the nearest chimney, whose two slits look like mischievous eyes leering wickedly, the goblin impression being increased a hundred-fold as dusk creeps on, and curly blue smoke issues from the four sides. It was here that the Doctor Sahib gave one of his very rare beatings, for a pony came in heavily laden and

terribly lame. Discovering the owner, that gentleman received a lesson on his back, which lost considerably in its application and came to a premature conclusion by the stick breaking on his heavy homespun garments.

The next day's march was also enlivened by a similar incident, for the Doctor as he walked, came up with a Yarkandi merchant urging his already well-laden pony along, and then added his own well-clad fat self to the load. Coming to a channel across the path the animal overladen with its double burden, did not jump with sufficient vigour, and the rider gave it a vicious beating. To his great surprise, he immediately felt a similar beating on his own back, and, stout of build as he was, he and his companions all dismounted at the command of the white man and continued on foot. Further on is a spot where we once saw a pony left to die by the roadside. It could still lift its head feebly, although the vultures had already removed the upper eye as it lay on its side. Unfortunately we had neither gun nor knife with us, and after discussing whether we should be successful in giving the *coup de grâce* with a big stone or merely add to its agony, we feared the latter, and had to pass on.

But there are other memories of this bit of road, for it was here that we saw one June "the wilderness blossoming as a rose," and not only as a rose, for in many little sheltered nooks and crannies of the big boulders white aquilegias clustered, so fragile-looking in their hard stone setting. Further on, just past a joyous "watersmeet" where another stream joins the Dras river, we always look for a funny little nook under a big overhanging slab of stone, so typical of the little sheltering places which meet the simple needs of our Ladaki brethren, as the traces in blackened stones put together for a camp fire, shew. But on the upward road we lunch at Chanegund, a little *bagh* on a small plateau with the village of Chuli Skampo (dry apricot) still higher on the hill above. We notice some houses and a little area of cultivation on the

other side with tracks leading in and out, and we wonder at the inhabitants who spend their whole lives there, and possibly never even reach the bridge some four miles away, that would lead them to a comparative civilization. This is the suspension bridge over which the road branches off for Skardu, the capital of Baltistan, but we keep straight on and where the Dras river pours into the swiftly flowing Suru, turn a sharp corner, and slowly wend our way into Kargil, enjoying the gradual opening out into a broad valley, and the soft lights on the distant hills. Kargil is the capital of Purig, and even has a small bazaar, but its rest-house is famed among those of us who know the road well for the unpleasant amount of personal "shikar" (hunting) that must always be done there.

The next day we set out with pleasant anticipations, for we shall at last really re-enter Lamaland, our own Ladak. This is the longest march of all, and this, too, we have sometimes varied by getting the first few miles done the previous evening, and enjoying all the special glories of the westering sun. So we remember, as we round one corner, how the long rays caught the figure of a woman on the other side of the gorge, as she rounded the top of a small hill, and exaggerating the furry outline of her rough sheepskin and her unkempt hair, made our companion, new to the country, exclaim "Just look at that bear." For some miles along this march, we note the remains of a long aqueduct which was laid out to bring water to an extensive plateau just above Kargil, with the hope of transforming its desert barrenness into cultivated fields, but alas! when the source was directed into the channel it was inadequate and after all the expenditure incurred, not a drop reached the dry acres.

At the end of the first few miles is the village of Pashkyim, a long pleasant area of green valley reposing in its peaceful hills. Once when we camped there on our downward way it was anything but peaceful, for a wind-storm arose and blew masses of dust into our tents, and into a meal on which we

were engaged, becoming so violent that our tents partly blew down we were partly helped to descend, for its inhospitality drove us on into Kargil. The camping ground is a very pleasant one near some mills by a stream. On through a gradually narrowing gorge to Lotsun, where half of the whole march is done, then through Darkit, where the "headman" of the wee village is a woman, and then at last the defile opens out, and the mountains round the valley of Mulbek come into view.

As we emerge we see our first *chortens* on the hill on our right, and a little further on we notice that another broad valley enters the Mulbek one at an obtuse angle, while whole ranges of mountains come into view, vast upheavals at all sorts of angles. Still a little further till we have to turn our heads well round on the right, then at last we spy, built into the side of the rock behind and facing that other valley, Shergol, our first lamasary, the queerest, most elfish of structures, only distinguishable by its whitewash from the rocky formation into which it seems to merge. Now indeed we are back into Lamaland. Even before this, while watching for our first *dGonpa* (monastery), again a perfect little picture has claimed our attention on the left. A dear old grandmother, with her white uncovered locks blowing round her cheery wrinkled old face, is standing near a mossy-looking rock from which spring-water is falling, with her picturesque country basket, a four-sided structure converging to a cone-like point, at her side. This is a medicinal spring, famed for its tonic effect on the stomach, but on inquiry, the old lady says she has been applying the water to her arms and shoulders for which it is also remedial. Evidently she suffers from rheumatism in her old age.

The next part of the road has already been referred to in our third chapter with its ludicrous resemblances to scenes and statues, all the more fantastic for the stately majesty of the great hills behind. Had the long march so wearied us that we were getting dreamy, or was that really an old judge in

his wig standing over there, with a markedly malevolent look in one big bad eye, seeming to watch with great resentment the intrusion of our Western selves into his valley? Certainly that eye follows us till we are level with him, after which suddenly turning, we find that he too has turned back again to see what other intruders will follow, and we wonder how the rest of our party will stand his evil scorn. Then our eye falls on a giant emerging with his broom from his cave, from which we can trace the track down which he goes to fetch water. His face is hidden, but shoulder, arm and broom are clearly visible. What mystery is he brooming out with such persistence? A little further we spy a Mongolian-looking female, eyes closed, and flattened nose turned up in utter disgust at our European smell. So, though the last few miles are generally the longest, these are more than beguiled by all the strange wizard-like forms and fairy-like scenes we see depicted opposite, varied with glimpses into deep narrow ravines with more weird formations, suggesting the strangest mysteries.

Our attention is diverted, however, by Mulbek's monastery, perched high up on inaccessible-looking crags and dominating the whole valley. Strange and sudden on its perch, fascinating in its form and outline, we at last turn down under its very shadow to the polo ground, on the nearer side of which is the rest-house, and on the further side the central stream. All along we have been noting how exactly the strange dwellers of this valley fitted the scenery from head to foot, indeed especially head-dress and footgear, no doubt contributing to our feeling of being intruders. The chuckling fat babies with their nun's style of close-fitting cap, tucked into one of the aforementioned baskets, and left on the edge of the field in which their care-taker is busy, are particularly attractive. At the bungalow we find a lot of *respas* (turn-men) waiting to secure the job of our transport for the next day. In our staff is a coolie boy from a village near Leh, who came to us utterly destitute in

Srinagar, wearing a puggaree, a pair of trousers, and a warm shirt with military breast pockets, in which he apparently carried all his worldly goods, rather to the confusion of the natural outlines of his broad manly chest. This boy, a Mussulman named Ibchung (little Abraham) constantly delighted us by his cheery ways, and naïve enjoyment of life. Seeing our interest in these strange people, he promptly marshalled them before us and shewed them off as though he had specially collected them for the purpose. Dirty and ragged, but delightfully cheery, enjoying us as we did them, all looked ready to pop into a fairy tale. One with a red cap was quite the dandy of the party, another wrinkled old man with hair untidily fringing out of his pigtail and round his face, had a big cavern between two isolated teeth. There was a boy with a coarsely-quilted sleeveless padded waistcoat, even at the end of May. Here was a living representative of Absalom, a Balti wearing a little round cap with rolled up edges, dark curling locks falling on to each shoulder, big black eyes, and, unlike our Buddhist Ladakis, an expression of utter gloom.

As we waited for our luggage, we noted the paraphernalia attached to the people, as demonstrated by Ibchung. One old chap with bracelets of wool on his arm was spinning from it on to a little wooden spindle. From his wool he would make sacks, carpets or ropes. His was black wool from a cow, while another, filling his enforced idleness with like industry, was spinning from the white wool of a goat, twirling the spindle almost unconsciously as he gazed at us. In their belts and about their persons was quite an array of instruments, such as flint and tinder, knife, long spoon, spectacles in case, sewing purse and pen-case, the last empty as is usual with these people. These were all depending from the waist, and often a large brass soup or tea ladle was stuck in the folds of their ample sash behind. In front, hanging by a small chain, one man had a little pair of broad-ended forceps for

extracting thorns or obstrusive whiskers, the nasal vibrissae being special objects of dislike. Some wore necklaces of turquoise and coral or red beads, others had ear-rings and many had bracelets, often in the form of a clasp not quite meeting round the wrist, whose two ends represented the heads of snakes. As we turned to attend to our luggage we gave them a coloured picture torn from the back of a magazine, and they carried it off and discussed it with great joy.

The next day we still had to traverse the further half of the valley, and even in the prosaic morning time, we constantly noticed fantastic shapes in the rocks on the other side. There was a realistic statue of Judge Cockburn, a certain outline of Cardinal Wolsey, and, just as we turned to the left to leave the main valley, guarding the entrance to a small nullah on the opposite side, was that strangest formation of all, a high pinnacle of rock, left standing like a gigantic solitary stalagmite, whose outline was weathered into the irresistible suggestion of a maternal figure, with one child nestled at her knees and another peeping over her left shoulder. In strong contrast to the size of these figures one slowly descried a monastic house and a few less important dwellings built into the base of the pillar in the usual gnomish fashion, from whose chimneys the blue smoke rose to curl up like incense obscuring the Madonna's face.

Leaving this strange valley, which, for all its weird suggestiveness, has an atmosphere of pleasant peacefulness, we turn to the left and then to the right again, and slowly wend our way up a long bare ascent to the Namika La (the Sky-high Pass) of 13,000 feet. On the way a ragged picturesque man, and a little child who was far more so, were seen leading a flock of small sheep and goats along the hillside, though what sustenance they were going to find in this dry barrenness was hard to see. The top of the pass has a fine panoramic view, and, having dismounted from our panting ponies, who ascend the last steep bit with constant pauses and periodic breathing,

we let them rest a few minutes, while we sit by the *lhato* and enjoy the sea of mountain tops all around. The path descends into the open valley of Bot Kharbu, a long smiling stretch of cultivation with several small villages and a few ruined forts and castles on the hilltops. These were the scenes of fighting in the seventeenth century. Occasionally we note a rough bridge across the main stream, made just of the trunk of a tree or of two such logs side by side, of which one is a little lower, so that, if nervous, one could choose it, and hold on to the higher. One noticeable cluster of houses, called Stagtse, is picturesquely grouped round a pointed rock on the other side of the stream. Near the rest-house, we see, on the further side also, that little collection of houses which gives the best example on all the road of how the native dwelling is fashioned like and merges into the surrounding rock.

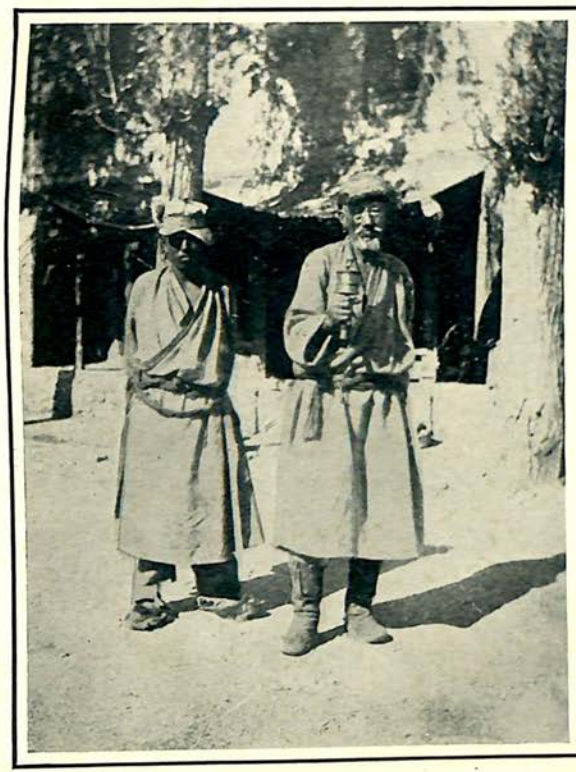
Overhanging that part of the village in which the dak bungalow is to be found is a high rock with ruins of a castle or fort, conspicuous above which, and noticed from afar, is the figure of a man meditating over the valley, and brooding over the past history of its wars. When we arrive under it, we see it is only a sandstone figure, carved by the storms of centuries just as those seen on the day before.

The next day we leave the valley and enter a slowly narrowing long defile, leading to the foot of the highest pass we have to cross, and some six miles out of Kharbu we pass Henasku in a ravine on the left, already quoted as an example and, perhaps a better one than yesterday's, of a series of transitional rock dwellings, and looking so lonely and so weird on its high cliff. Pausing at the foot of the Pass, where there is water though no shade, for a meal, we then climb up to 13,500 feet, but just before the summit is reached, we come upon a nice group of Ladakis camping in that glorious scenery. We turn round to admire the way they have "parked out" their loads of bulging sacks into a wind shelter, against which they rest their own appropriate figures. Behind them is a magni-

ficent stretch of mountains, its breadth and expanse exceeding those of yesterday's pass ; the glory of light and shade are indescribable, and this little group of humanity in the foreground just completes the picture. To their right by a tiny trickle of water behind a little rock, a delightful pair have detached themselves from the party to engage in " Chos Choches " (doing religion). One has a wee tray on a collapsible stand and a spoon, all of which can be shut up within a kind of teapot, its cover forming a second platter when reversed, and here he is busy with his libations and mumbling away at his prayers, though apparently only a layman, while the younger man assists him. Completing the ascent an equally wonderful view bursts on the sight, but there is no sign of cultivation on these bare brown or snowwhite peaks, and one really feels as though even at the " back of beyond " in every direction, there never would be human habitation again. But there just below us a yak tosses up his head, and gallops off, while soon our eyes light upon another picturesque camp arranged within a wall of sacks. One of our Tibetan friends, preferring a sun to a water-bath, has slipped his arms out of his wide sleeves and sits there bare to his waist, though we ourselves find the breeze quite chilly at these heights. Down, down, down again, and the big peaks vanish while the little hills rise. Round many corners we come to a bare wild ravine with a dark frowning hill behind, fit framing for a solitary *chorten*, throwing into relief its whitewashed base and red-ringed superstructure. Now we know a village must be near, and up a little zigzag path we go, and around another big *chorten*, then catch our breath at the picture that lies before us, a village we have already described as a suitable capital for " Hobgoblinland." Nor does this impression diminish, rather, each time one rounds that corner it strikes the imagination more forcibly, and seems as though it can only be some dreamland phantasm. Even as you come down upon the prosaic little rest-house on its platform below the hill, the

chimneys of its cook-houses look up at you like unblinking owls. To visit the monastery the path leads up to turn abruptly near a series of little dwelling places covering a small hill. Unrelieved by the usual balconies and adornments of village houses, they appear more like stables, but we are informed they are the abodes of the nuns. The *dGonpa* itself is very picturesque and a camera might be busy at each corner, but the dirt and dust are terrible. The Lamas who belong to the red sect, are degraded looking, and the whole atmosphere of the village is evil, as several travellers have noticed. What wonder that below the village we come upon that disinterred Sodom and Gomorrah already mentioned, perhaps more aptly described as a ruinous Gehenna with its twisted sulphurous pillars. So we pass along the high road, meeting the Indus at the suspension bridge just below the village of Kalatse, and keeping it company to Saspola. It was when riding along this piece of road that seven year old Helen asked, as more mountains came into view, peering over their fellows, "Mummy, how did the mountains make theirselves so big?" After a long uninhabited stretch of stony road we note a welcome green patch on the other side, where about three houses find enough cultivatable ground, fed from a falling stream, to support their inmates, and we are told that in winter they send their animals across the frozen river, now wide and rushing, to find what roots they can and to bask in the warmth on the sunny side. As our destination approaches, a crazy-looking cantilever bridge with no side rails crosses the river. Though fairly broad, it spans a high gulf, and it is only certain local ponies who are used to it, whom one can dare to take over. Fortunately it is not on the high road, and we may pass on in peace of mind.

The following march ascends a *rong*, which may be defined as a pass "which goes up, but not down," a narrow defile which opens out eventually on to a broad plain, whence the snow crests surrounding the long broad Indus valley in the



TWO LADAKIS IN THE BAZAAR AT LEH.

The old Meme (grandfather) has his prayer-wheel with him in order to accumulate merit. He is wearing *charoks*, Yarkandi boots of thin red leather with a felt stocking inside. His companion prefers Ladaki footwear, of which the uppers are woven of coarse wool, sewn on to rope soles. The toes are turned up.

THE BABY SKUSHOG OF SPITUK

With his two lama "nurses." He is wearing the gilded official riding hat.

neighbourhood of Leh can be seen. But there is a sudden descent from this plateau into the pretty and quaint little village of Basgo, which, with its peculiar rocks and ruins, *chorten* gates and *mani* walls, appeals to some people more than Lamayuru. In spring it is certainly a gem in the bare hills, for on the verge of the plain one suddenly comes upon it as a mass of apricot blossom. Above the Basgo-Nyemo valley neither the apricot nor the apple ripen properly, and the Leh supplies come mostly from there or from Saspola. The main road, which we must occasionally remind ourselves is the high road to Central Asia, leading through the village, passes many tumbledown *chortens* and *mani* walls, and, in one little recess on the left, one sees a fine example of a prayer-wheel made of a kerosene tin. On the outskirts, a row of prayer-wheels may be noted on a roof, waiting to be turned by the wind.

Over a sandy four-mile plain with a long *mani* wall extending half-way, we reach Nyemo, which looked only about twenty minutes ride from Bazgo, and are glad to enter the shade of its large *bagh*, and new bungalow. Here we remember camping once and taking our meal in the open by our tents, when a group of traders and their servants from the serai came to watch this interesting performance. Wearying of their unabashed stare, the Doctor Sahib at length rose, and addressed them in their own language. Pointing solemnly to the members indicated, he said, "I too am a man, I have eyes, ears, nose and mouth." A grin slowly spread over their faces as they caught the rebuke, and they stole away to bother us no more.

Now we have one more *rong* to ascend, then we soon come out on to a long terraced plain with a glorious view of our own Leh valley, the Indus spreading out into several silver streaks as it winds in and out of its broad acres. Grateful after the narrow gorges and long defiles is this open expanse, ringed by range after range of peaks pointing up to some 20,000 feet above sea level, whose snow can never melt. "My very own

hills " says our small Helen, returning to Leh from England at the age of five. " Not Daddy's nor Mummy's, but my very own Leh Mountains, I was borned there," The terraced plains are very long, but at length we pass Spitug with its monastery-crowned hill on our right, and turning a corner see Leh away up in the foothills to our left. Such a short journey it looks in this clear, rarefied air, but it is a good five miles uphill before we enter the " Sta-rgo," horse-gate, of the little town we have come so far to see. Once more we view with delight its broad bazar, headed by the mosque, its row of poplars on one side, its castle high on a hill to the right and behind it the mountains, over which the Kardong Pass leads to the Karakorums and distant Yarkand.

CHAPTER VII

Over Many Passes

HAVING seen the high road to Leh, let us take a trip off the beaten track, along a much less prosaic road, for it is much more thrilling never to know what surprises lie just round the next corner. Towards the end of the march, however, there often seem to be endless " next corners " before the welcome sight of tent or dak-bungalow greets the eyes, with its promise of tea and a nap, the value of which are perhaps best realized after a hot march. Thus round such a corner may come into view the most ricketty of bridges sometimes made only of twigs and spanning a rushing river. Where the stream is smaller, not even this bridge is provided, and the only way across is to ford, which is no easy matter when the bed is not smooth but formed of huge boulders, so that one moment the pony is high up on a rock, the next plunges deep down between the stones. Then, too the boom boom of the swifter torrents filling one's ears inspires an additional fear of the onrush of these stones and smaller boulders which may catch the ponies' legs and break them. At times the road may lead along the bottom of a valley over the most stony of pathways imaginable, and with the overhanging rocks so low that man must " stoop to conquer," and even the ponies' saddles occasionally need to be shed and loads dropped to get underneath. Again, having climbed up a high pass there bursts on the view a panorama that defies description in its immensity and grandeur of upheaval. Moreover in these

sparsely populated regions the people are so interesting, for the customs and ways of the unadulterated lamaism often differ considerably from those of the high road.

But let us now accompany the " padre " and the " doctor ' in their trek from Ladak through Zankskar to Lahoul, and home *via* the Plains, thus traversing the whole of the Himalayan ranges from north to south, except the most northern, named the Karakoram Range. Leaving Leh we must first travel down the high road towards Kashmir for four days, that is along the Indus as far as the foot of the Lamayuru gorge. But let us remember the real name of this river is the " Senge Kabab," which means the one which " descends from the mouth of the Lion." The Tibetan names of the other rivers flowing from the region of the holy lake, Manosarowar, also indicate the true sources of their mighty waters, for does not the Sutlej or " Langchen kabab " descend from the mouth of the elephant, the Gogo is the " Mamzhi kabab " descending from the mouth of the peacock, while the Brahmaputra or " Damchog kabab " descends from the ear of the horse. In our Western ignorance we often garble these Tibetan names. Thus Darjeeling should be called " Dorjhe Ling " the " Country of the Thunderbolt," whilst Kalimpong is our distorted version of " Kalonpug," the cave of the prime minister. But let us get back to Lamayuru whence our road turns due south across that division of the Himalayas known as the "Ri-gyal" or mountain king range. Our first march takes us over a small pass to Wanla, and we must get used to Passes, as within a short period we have to cross fifteen, of which all but five are fairly high ones. Wanla is a pretty village and shows signs of having been an important one. Crowning the hill which dominates the village is a fine old ruin, and behind it a most peculiar built monastery, in many places resting on beams which look so insecure that they must give way on the slightest provocation. That they still hold is doubtless

due to the fine water prayer-wheel in the village, which day and night turns round its prayers to benefit the community, while in the walls of the little shelter made to accommodate it four more rather large prayer-wheels are inserted to be worked by hand, so that the passer-by, giving them a meritorious twirl as he goes along, may add his contribution to the volume of prayer that brings favour to the village. Just now is the time of harvest in Wanla. Here the barley and wheat are cut and carried to the side of the hill to dry, a process which must soon be accomplished, for the heat from the stones is very great. In the evening a poor old man, blind in one eye arrives, and the cause being established as cataract, a temporary operating theatre is set up, instruments boiled and the trouble removed. Another poor old fellow completely blind, deaf and otherwise deformed, also asks for help, but alas, he is beyond the aid even of Western medical science, and, as he is very poor, the meagre solace of a little gift is all that can be done for him. There is hardly any operation so dramatic as that of cataract extraction, for the patient may be totally blind at one moment and the next receive his sight. It is all the more sad to have to tell some of these poor blind folk that it is impossible to give them back their vision, especially when so often that faculty might have been saved had they come to the doctor sooner.

Arrangements have now to be made for the next day's march, and we are told that the road is so bad that it will take all the Wanla horses and all the Wanla men to get us to Hunupata, the next village at which we halt ; nor is the picture overdrawn. Next morning all are busy. Breakfast is cooked and eaten, and wise is he who begins by shipping aboard plenty of food ! Stores and cooking utensils are packed into *yakdans* and *kiltas*, the Indian-made travelling boxes and baskets, one of which forms half-a-pony load, and we are off, enjoying the sheer delight of marching in the clear

pure cool air of the early morning. Our road runs along the left bank of the Wanla stream for about three miles, then we have to cross it by such a bridge that those of us who are riding dare not trust our ponies to it, and must ford. Soon after the thrills promised by our friends in the village begin. The path runs along the cliff, varying from ten to two hundred feet above the river, which is now fairly deep and rushing. Often it is hardly wider than the hand can span, and, of course, the track always runs along the extreme edge, as roads in this country usually do, while over the edge is first a rapid decline, then a perpendicular drop straight down into the river. One slip off the road and the chances of recovery are practically nil, while the preliminary slither down the slope would just allow time to realize the pleasant drop which would occur when the perpendicular part was reached. Walking along this so-called bridle path, I remembered coming along the same road some years before in early summer, and how at one place the path, to add to its terrors, was actually covered with sloping ice, and I admit having shirked it by climbing up along the hill above. After a walk of two-and-a-half hours we reached the pretty little village, Panjila, but, before arriving could not help noting the only sign of vegetation on that bare hillside, one lonely pine tree of considerable age. Evidently it had found a little spring to sustain its life. So quaintly does the smallest rill or source of water permit the growth of one or two trees in such a dry stony land. No wonder that in its fantastic isolation the *shugpa* or pencil cedar of Ladak, is regarded as a holy tree and in it dwells a *Lha* or good spirit. Often an altar piled high with the horns of wild sheep or goats is built around the stem of such a tree, and of certain *shugpa* it is said that to break off a twig or branch will cause the death of the offender within a year. Thus, among the oldest trees in the land, where wood is in such demand for fuel, is the *Shugpa*, owing its existence to the protection of its gods.

. But the road does not mend, rather it grows worse; nevertheless he who braves it is fully repaid, for it leads to one of the most wonderful gorges in the world. Soon after leaving Panjila, we cross quite a short bridge, two hundred feet below which roars the river, running between high perpendicular cliffs. A little further down, it has hollowed out of some conglomerate rock a magnificent tunnel through which the waters thunder. The road has now become difficult enough, consisting of large slabs of slaty rocks which have descended irregularly from the cliffs, which rise up perpendicularly for some thousand feet at the side. How one would enjoy watching, from a safe distance, the descent of one of these large rocks. The Padre tells of how he was once belated on such a road, and suddenly the cliff above him and his servant began falling down. His Ladaki companion cried out, "Sahib, our end has come," but they pressed themselves tightly up against a rock, trusting their horses to do the same, and thus escaped. Now we come to a bridge, and what a bridge! Four poplar trees have been thrown across the stream, but wood has apparently been scarce, for on top of these large slabs of stone are placed, which bob up and down as the pony crosses over them. However, the drop is not more than eighty feet even if we should go over. Up and down the hillsides we go to avoid precipitous cliffs; then the brook must be forded, and, as the pony plunges up and down, one wonders how wet the tiffin bread in the saddle-bag is getting. Now we wander along the bed of the stream itself, not too full of water this time of the year, yet not without difficulties, for in three or four places the adjacent rocks overhang it, while in one place they are actually so low that the ponies can only pass underneath with their saddles removed. But look around at the view. Here by your side is a clear bubbling stream which can yet make a very respectable roar as it passes through its self-excavated tunnels. At its side grow rose bushes and tamarisks in profusion, while

the wild red currants, now ripe, are wonderfully sweet to the taste. Then look up to right and left, and see the great slabs of cliffs, rising absolutely straight up from the river for over 1,000 feet; or, where they lean at all, the slope is inwards. Behind them are further tiers. Beyond, more cliffs, rising up to a similar height, look just like huge stalagmites, the formation of cliff and stalagmite together often suggesting one of nature's wonderful cathedrals with its many spires. The Ladaki would people them with his *lhas* (spirits), which he certainly believes inhabit the stalagmites.

At last we turn a corner and our hair might turn grey too, for the natural road stops abruptly at one of these perpendicular rocks, on to which human hands have built a kind of rough scaffolding. On every little projection from this rock stones have been merely laid to the desired level, and not even cemented with mud. Jutting out from the rock are beams ; how they have been fixed in it is impossible to say, and resting on these more beams parallel with the cliff, and finally, to give a firm footing, slabs of rock. Why the whole crazy structure does not topple down is past comprehension. The doctor, wishing to be whole in order to render first-aid to the Padre should calamity over-take him, crosses over first, to feel peculiar sensations up and down his spine as he watches his colleague follow after him. Even the horses seem to realize their precarious position, and press close up to the cliff. Having safely traversed this piece of road, we are not surprised to see a *chorten* and a *mani* wall, though still miles away from human habitation, for even the Ladaki must feel he needs a special safeguard for such a perilous passage.

From now our road descends until we reach Hanupata, where, although the onset of rain threatens to damp our welcome, the villagers make up for it in the heartiness of their greeting. The *mGopa* or headman begs us to come and rest in a "very nice room" of his house until our luggage

arrives, and leads us thither up crooked rocky lanes, through dark alleys, up ricketty ladders, and under low portals, which give rude shocks to our heads or topees. This "very nice room" with its mud walls is about 15 ft. by 18 ft. in size, while its low dirty roof just above our heads, has been stained a beautiful shining mohagany by years of smoke, a process being continued by a fire at the further end, whose acrid fumes, most painful to the eyes, fill the room. To the left a nice large verandah admits fresh air, and appears to be the only clean spot in the room, not excepting our travel-stained selves. While the water for our tea is being boiled, the family produce a black rug, woven from sheeps' hair, and place it on the floor, so that we may both sit and "lay our table" upon it. The family, vastly entertained and entertaining, sit around, consisting of father, son, son-in-law, and one or two ladies whose relationship is not precisely ascertained. We tell them of the road already traversed; they tell us of joys to come. The old grandfather, or *Meme*, is specially interesting as he sits on the verandah, wearing a peculiar type of hat of a fashion only retained by a few of the oldest inhabitants, though still part of the ceremonial dress at weddings. Like a very elongated tea-cosy, it is doubled over to one side in the middle, has a turned-up brim, and was introduced by King Senge Namgyal. The old man is smoking his pipe with such enjoyment, that we are constrained to inquire as to the source of his tobacco, for such relish can hardly be credited to the old metal pipe. He replies that he has gathered the fragrant leaf from the hillside. The Padre having a fellow-feeling with this smoker gives the old man some of his own "Country Life" tobacco to sample. He fills his bowl, and his face lights up as he puffs away at the wonderful new concoction, and assumes a beatific contentment. Taking out his pipe, he surveys it with a smile, for who could have believed even that old friend could have produced such a delightful inhalation.

Asked how he was enjoying it, he replied that if he smoked much more he would become intoxicated.

Having refreshed ourselves with tea, and the rain having ceased, we go to look for a good camping spot, and fix on a field already harvested. Soon our luggage arrives, and the ponymen tell us that for four miles they had to unload their ponies and carry the loads themselves. Fancy carrying a heavy tent over a bad road for four miles! Two of the ponies had fallen down the steep hillside with their loads tightly bound on their backs; but, fortunately for them, these were bedding and tents, so they did not hurt themselves seriously, and, fortunately for us, they just stopped short of the water, so we had dry beds that night. This part of the road has been described somewhat in detail, and, although all is perfectly true, yet it is not so bad in the actual going as it sounds, for one is much too occupied with the next step to worry about potential accidents, and it is only in prospect or retrospect that the perils of the road appal.

Early next morning we are off again, and soon come to the inevitable pass. Here the many marmots provide interest by announcing the coming of a stranger with a shrill policeman-like whistle, as they sit at the doors of their burrows. They are remarkably tame, for the Doctor stalked one and actually touched him with his stick as he disappeared down his hole, only to reappear a few minutes later. He was then about to reach his hand out to stroke him, but was warned by his Ladaki *zhabzhi* (foot-helper) that they bite hard. When travelling in another direction some weeks before this, my companion's dog noticed a marmot running hard for his hole. "Bunty" managed to head him off and bowl him over, biting him hard in the abdomen, but nowhere else, for friend marmot was a sportsman. He sat up on his hind legs held up his fists in the approved boxer fashion, and kept "Bunty" at bay. We were able to walk right up to the combatants, when, seeing the marmot was badly

injured, he was given the *coup de grâce* with the business end of a riding-crop.

Horses and men being rather tired, we decided to give them a rest day, which we began by extracting two cataracts and excising a large tumour, following which medicines were dispensed. The sahibs being thus engaged, the servants took the opportunity of having a baking day, so as to substitute bread for the chupattis with which they had now provided us for some days. Baking in this part of the world is an interesting process. First the dough is made with leaven, placed in a covered tin, and put into the sun to ferment, but if there is no sunshine, it is kept warm by covering it with all the bedding of the servants, and wise is the sahib who does not scrutinize this covering too closely, remembering rather that what the eye does not see, the heart does not grieve over. While the dough is rising, the oven must be prepared. The walls of this are made of large dry plaques of cow manure, and the roof of a big slab of the same material. The latter interested us, and we inquired how it was procured. We were told that throughout the whole winter the stables are not cleared out, but the continual stamping of animals and men makes quite a hard floor of manure, which is cut out in large chunks in the spring. But if we wait too long for these explanations, our bread will be sour. The oven itself is now set on fire, and by the time the dough is ready the whole thing is glowing splendidly. The dough in its covered tin is placed inside, and a door of glowing dung closes the oven. The resulting bread is all one can wish! Having cooked the bread, the fire still functions, for on it the servants' Sunday dinner is cooked. A sheep has been killed for the sahibs, and the servants receive the head as their perquisite. The head, with hair, eyes, brain and everything intact, is placed in the fire of manure, the hair burns off, and a meal, fit for a Ladaki king at any rate, emerges.

On again next day over the "Sengela" or "lion pass."

A long gradual ascent leads to it, covered with wonderful flowers, and as the doctor climbs up, he remembers an experience he had there some years before. His colleague's mare was taken ill when nearing the top, and was unable to proceed unaided. It was a matter of either deserting her or dragging her over, and as the last half mile of the pass was under deep snow, the latter proved to be an even harder task than anticipated. Holding with one hand to the tail of his Zankskar pony, and with the other pulling the mane of the sick mare, the former animal dragged both of them over a 16,600 feet pass through deep snow.

This pass brought us to Yulchung, from which we made a detour to Lingshed, but we will not linger there now, as we shall be referring to it elsewhere. Beyond it, the road runs along the side of the hills on the right bank of the river, whose left one would seem to have been shaped out by some Goliath into gigantic stalls to stable his horses. Next comes a steep drop down to the river, where a truly Ladaki bridge awaits us. No doubt some belated traveller, needing wood to provide himself with the consolation of his butter-tea, has helped himself to some of the flooring of the bridge. The next arrival has not been long troubled by this lack of boarding, for there are plenty of large slabs and stones about to place on the various gaps. As our pony stepped on to one of these, it tipped up, and a hundred and fifty feet below roared the Charab river. Such a place must abound with evil spirits, but nature has kindly provided a large rock, shaped like a sugar loaf, as a foundation for the propitiatory altar. On one side of it some human hands have managed to make another large stone rest, supporting others up to a level with the top of the sugar loaf, and across this peculiar base have balanced a huge flat slab of rock, piled high with the horns of wild sheep and goats. Facing this strange structure a throne of stone has been erected for the officiating *Skushog* or lama, when religious rites are performed here.

From this point we slowly mounted for two days before reaching the " La ngo " or head of the pass. On the way a large avalanche had blocked the whole road, through which the river had eaten a channel. Here a council of war had to be held to decide whether to surmount the obstruction or get under it. The former involved a bad high jump for the ponies, the latter the enlarging of the entrance with a wood chopper. We decided that to go under would be the easier solution, as it generally is. Inside we found ourselves in a tunnel, about a hundred feet long, roofed by the frozen snow of the avalanche, floored by the river, and walled in by two mountains, along whose bases we crept. One of the ponies stepped on to a slippery rock, and fell into the river, knocking the man who was leading him over on to one side, and we all breathed a sigh of relief on finding neither man nor beast had broken a bone. At the outlet of the tunnel, a high wall of snow still remained, cutting us off from the road, out of which a slice had to be hacked with the chopper to allow access to the latter.

On the third day we reached Zangla, the first village in the province of Zankskar.

CHAPTER VIII

Into Zankskar

ZANGLA is the capital of a small province of Zankskar, consisting of only seven villages, which were presented to a former King in reward for aid rendered to Zorowar, the Dogra general, on his way through to the conquest of Ladak.

We were heartily welcomed by the King, who is also a *Skushog*, and who allowed us to put up our tents in his private garden. That evening, when requiring a place in which to show our lantern slides, a fine large room in the castle was put at our disposal ; the majority of the villagers came to the entertainment, and his Majesty also honoured the performance, sitting on a chair, of which he possessed two, placed among his subjects, who squatted on the floor around.

Next morning quite a concourse of men had gathered to carry our luggage. Some of our loads were naturally lighter than others, but in Zangla everything is done in an orderly fashion. A young fellow, perhaps the only layman of the village who can read, has a small bundle of sticks, on one of which each male villager has his name written. The ones representing those whose turn it is to carry to-day are picked out and placed at haphazard on the various bundles. Each man finds his own name-stick, and without demur shoulders the load which the god of fortune has sent him.

In the province of Bashahr things are not quite so nicely arranged, for when it comes to the casting of lots, each man fetches a stick for himself, but if he happens later to find that

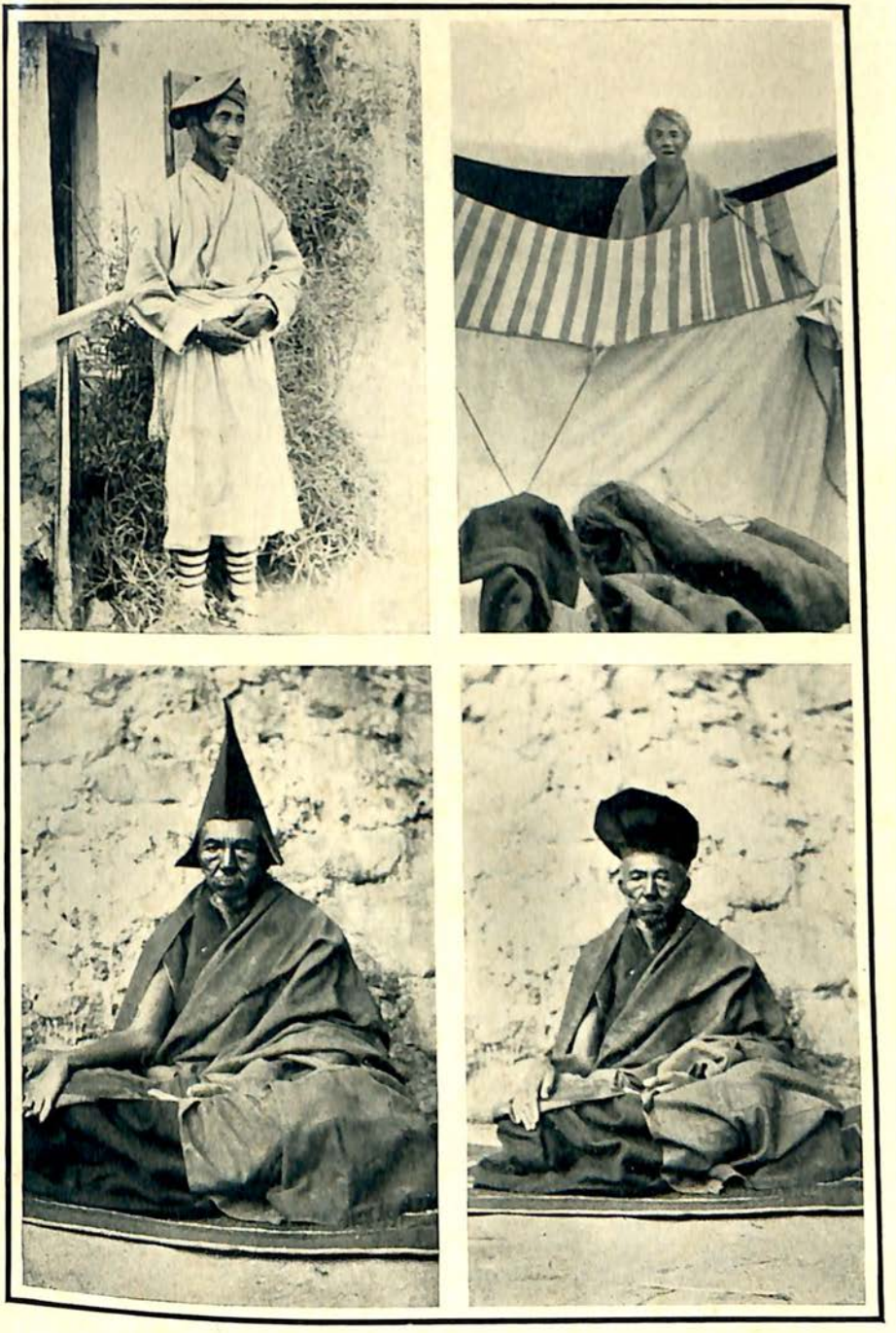
stick on a heavy load, he calls upon "dGonmchog Sum" (the three Gods) to witness that this is not the stick of his choice; but his neighbour's. Spitti's method is far superior, for there the dice settles the matter.

Another day's journey brings us to the capital of the province, but before reaching this we have another type of bridge to cross, this time made of rope. From this place onwards we saw a good many of these, so it may be well to describe one. A prominent rock from which to sling the ropes, is selected on either side of the river. These ropes are made of the twigs of birch or poplar, plaited together. Four such ropes tied together constitute the actual pathway, just broad enough to accommodate a boot. On either side is a rail of the same material, connected by similar strands to the footway, and at each end the latter and the rails are wound and tied round beams, kept in position by large pieces of rock. Often, of course, pieces of this bridge completely disappear, but it is not till someone falls through and ends his present incarnation, that the Ladaki considers there is an indication for repairs to be undertaken. To cross this bridge we first mount the cliff over which its end is swung, then lean well forward to catch hold of one rail with each hand, and place the foot gingerly on the footway. It is impossible to grasp the whole handrail, for it is far too thick, and so rough that it may tear the hands. The bridge sags in the centre, so the first half descends at rather a steep angle, which does not make matters easier, for after about ten paces one cannot help catching sight of the swirling river some hundred feet below. Towards the middle the bridge begins to sway, as a slight wind is blowing, but there can be no turning back now; moreover the worst half is over, for from the centre the ascent to the further side begins. Looking back, we find that even our Ladaki cook has lost his nerve and will not venture. The prospect is bad,—no cook, no dinner. But the problem is soon solved, for a local man hoists him up and soon takes him over

pick-a-pack. To the men of these parts their bridges offer no thrills; they often carry cattle over on their backs, first taking the precaution of tying their legs. Some time after we had reached camp, our other two servants came in and told us of their experiences at that bridge. "Are you afraid?" said one. "No, not a bit," replied his comrade, while in sheer fright the tears chased one another down his cheeks. However, one soon gets quite blasé about these bridges, and I crossed my fourth with a light heart. But how do the ponies fare? They have to be relieved of their loads, which men carry over the bridge and they themselves must swim the torrent. Our own Mongolian pony was shown a horse on the further side, hoping that he would think it had arrived safely and would follow its good example, but he had to be driven in several times with much shouting and raising of arms before he would venture across, and the sturdy animal was quite out of breath on arriving at the other bank.

At Padum a day's rest was decreed, not only from marching, but also to extract fourteen cataracts, which were awaiting operation. The next day on again, until finally we reached the Shingkung La, the Pass which divides Zankskar from Lahoul, and which took us four days to cross. Going to the foot of the Pass on the first day, we noticed some peculiar huts on the opposite side of the river which proved to be dwellings, built of yaks' dung. During the summer, when the yaks are allowed to graze the hillsides, their shepherds first build low walls of stone, then bring the plaques of dung, which they collect each day, to build a slanting roof, of which each superimposed layer overlaps slightly inwards. When winter comes, the yaks are driven back into the village, and the collections of dung taken home for the winter fuel.

Having reached the top of the Pass, a most wonderful view is unfolded. To right and left rise glorious peaks covered with glittering snowfields or glaciers, while our path itself lies across an avalanche, though it is difficult to realize this,



1. A Ladaki from a Side Valley.

One of the few old men who still wear regularly a turnover hat introduced by a former king.

2. A Breezy Dwelling.

A Tibetan nomad looking through the aperture at the top of his quaint tent, which serves as chimney, ventilator and observatory.

3 & 4. Head Teacher of the Monastery of Sankar.

He is the secular instructor of the Baby Skushog. He is wearing ceremonial hats used on different occasions.

as it is covered with a thick layer of stones and rocks. To the right the river torrent has cut a deep gully, walled-in by tall, perpendicular snow-banks. But we have still far to go, and must not linger. At the bottom of the pass a very welcome sight reaches us, for there a splendidly-built bridge spans the river, and from its further side winds a well-made road. After scrambling and slipping over the most appalling tracks for days, what a joy it is to plant one's foot fair and square on a well-metalled road. It is hardly necessary to state that we have now passed into the territory of the Government of India. About four miles further along, this road brings us to some very high cliffs to the right, whilst on the left and below us is a tremendous jumble of huge boulders and rocks. We were informed that it was the site of a once flourishing village, but one day part of the cliff crumbled away, burying all the dwellings and their inhabitants. Great treasures might be found on digging here, but an ogre, who has actually been seen by several people, guards them at nights, and no-one would ever be so foolhardy as to pass that way.

Soon after this we struck the Bhaga river, which comes from the Baralatcha, and a little further on joins the Chandra, also descending from the same pass, to form the Chenab, and thus, after marching for nearly a month, we accomplished the first half of our journey, and reached Kyelang in Lahoul. Here we had intended to stay for eight days, but, alas, on the seventh snow began to fall, and continued to do so without interruption for three days. Such a heavy fall so early in the year was unprecedented, and the results were most unfortunate. All the leaves being still on the trees, the snow they lodged proved too heavy a weight, and not only were large branches broken off, but numbers of big strong trees were uprooted. Most of the harvest was still standing, and it was a sad sight to see wheat, barley and rye laid flat on the ground. We ourselves were entirely cut off from the outer world, to

the north by the Baralatcha, and to the south by the Rohtang Pass, the latter being the one over which the mails from India come in summer. After waiting patiently for a week, we thought we would try to open the Baralatcha, and get home to Ladak as originally planned *via* the Rupchu plateau. We reached the end of the first stage, only to find the snow was so deep that it was impossible to get ponies, and further progress was hopeless. As for the road itself, what a difference had occurred. Only a fortnight before it had been delightful travelling over it, but now large stretches had been completely carried away. We could hardly have believed it, had we not seen it with our own eyes. This happens every year, and every spring the Government of India repairs it.

Another week went by, and we thought we could try again, taking coolies right through. These were collected by order of the local Rajah, but they practically refused to go, and it began to look as if this road might have finally closed for the winter. Eventually we had to decide to cross the Rohtang Pass, march right through Kulu to the railhead at Pathancote, travel thence by rail to Amritzar and Rawalpindi, then along the motor road to Srinagar, and up to Leh along the usual sixteen marches.

This was going to be an expensive détour, so all possible kit was left at Kyelang till the next summer, including our Mongolian pony and two servants. On the third day we crossed over the Rohtang from Lahoul into Kulu, and, although the snow was still deep, by accomplishing the ascent in the early morning, it was hard underfoot and going was easy. The damage done on this pass was tragic. One avalanche carried away six hundred sheep and two shepherds, and a second accounted for four hundred sheep. Some weeks afterwards the sequel was published. One of the shepherds sheltered under a rock and was buried for fourteen days, but he happened to have some of the local butter or " ghee " with him, with which he kept himself alive, and finally managed to

crawl out. A few days under normal conditions left him apparently none the worse for his terrible experiences. The Baralatcha also opened before winter, but of forty-two horses in a caravan travelling to Kyelang from Leh and caught on the Rupchu plateau at the time of the storm, only twenty-four reached their destination. Our further travels through Kulu and Mandi State are in better known regions, and need no description here, save that one cannot refrain from referring to the country there as one of the most beautiful handiworks of our Creator.

CHAPTER IX

With Brogpa & Khampa

WE have spent a good deal of time over our trip to Lahoul, where we met with some interesting folk, and now we must visit other parts of the country where we shall meet with the Dards and the Khampas.

Is there anywhere in the world a stranger set of men, than those who call themselves "Drogpas," although they write this, if they can spell at all, "Brogpa"? Soon after we had first arrived in Ladak, a deputation from these people waited upon us requesting us to visit their villages to vaccinate old and young. So one fine day we set off along the usual roads, of which some were good and some were bad. While riding along one of the latter kind, we had an uncomfortable experience, for one of the ponies slipped and fell, but instead of throwing his rider over a very nasty precipice sheer down to a rushing river, he dropped him on the inner side next the cliff, and it was comforting to be told that the Ladaki pony always acts in this considerate manner, more to save his own skin, one has to confess, than that of his rider, for he has no desire to go over the precipice either. Apart from this we can recount no thrilling incidents, though we derived considerable amusement from our nightly halting places. Having determined to travel lightly, we took neither tents nor camp-beds, but for the former trusted to the hospitality of the villagers, and for the latter we carried large empty sacks, to fill which we borrowed straw at each village, returning it on our

departure. These mattresses placed on the ground, with our own bedding on top, provided comfortable and warm beds for the cold nights of early spring. And what pictures the words early spring conjure up in this part of the world. The snow is still low on the great mountains all around, but the mid-day sun is already hot, and the sky is an azure blue, flecked with white fleecy clouds.

Riding along the bare hillsides with the rivers hardly yet beginning to rise, their sources still icebound, round some corner suddenly comes into view a little gem of a village. The leaves are not yet in bud, but the apricot trees are in blossom, a veritable pink and white fairyland. At the approach is generally a picturesque *chorten*-topped gateway, often flanked with gay blossoming trees, and all about the village the little newly-melted rills with early green peeping out from the banks add their joyousness to the whole scene, set in a background of blue sky and snow-covered hill with distant white peaks peeping over. Sometimes we spent the night on a roof, partially covered or walled-round in places, sometimes a room was given us, and once even the portico of the village temple, where all night long a gay goddess painted on the wall never ceased to pluck at her stringed instrument as we slept at her feet, while at dusk our own feet were stepped over by a young attendant who went in to trim the temple lamps.

After a week of trekking we turned up a side valley which leads to one of the villages, whose inhabitants are exculsively Brogpas; but one also finds some of these people living scattered about in the ordinary hamlets of Ladak. On the road from Srinagar to Leh, Brogpas are met with in Dras. Here they are all Mohammedan, whilst in the village of Hanu the predominating religion is Buddhist. They are said to have originated from Gilgit, where they no doubt played the national game of polo and later introduced it to Ladak, in which a good many villages now have their own polo grounds.

They must have been quite a brave people at one time and they still love to recount the deeds done by their forbears ; in fact Dr. Francke says there are certain times when they like to forget that they are Ladakis, only remembering their Dardish descent. At such times they tell how siege was laid to one of their castles, food ran out, and it became a question of surrendering to the enemy or dying. Like brave men they decided on the latter. They all gathered in the large hall, and the oldest man was given the privilege of pushing away the stone on which stood the main pillar which supported the roof. Thus these courageous men passed into the Walhalla of the Dards. Or they tell how a Ladaki king wished to make his Dardish subjects do their share of forced labour, to which they objected. They therefore chose one of their old men to inform the king, that they never would be slaves, not even of a king. The old man received the reply that he himself would be the first who would be forced to work, but as he absolutely refused, they immured him. However his fellow countrymen were equally obstinate; so no forced labour could be extracted from any of them.

Now we meet our first representative of this race, who has come to welcome us from the village of Hanu. How quaint his greeting is ! He takes off his hat and twirls it round one of his fingers, reminding us rather of an English hip-hip-hurrah. Of course his hat differs from any hat worn by anybody else in Ladak, where the hat is of great diagnostic value. It is not unlike the hat of the Ladaki, but the part which is turned up is not lined with lambskin, and is continuous all the way round. Those worn by the ladies are different again, the upper half being turned over somewhat like a billycock hat ; the side turned over and uppermost is usually a veritable needle-case with rows of needles stuck into it. We asked them why they carried all these in their hats, to which they replied that each needle had been given by and represented a friend. The popular Brogpa woman should therefore not

be difficult to recognize, that is if those who are less so are scrupulously honest! Although they now speak a dialect of Tibetan they must at one time have had a language of their own of which one sometimes strikes peculiar remnants. At Kalatse, for instance, the branches of the pencil cedar are freshly put on one of their *lhatos* at the New Year, accompanied by the mumbling of phrases which they do not understand themselves, but which are usually remains of their own Dardish language.

Nothing, however, can be more strange than their religious arrangements. As has already been mentioned, the *Brogpa* of Hanu and also of the village of Da, which is quite near-by, is a Buddhist, but often in a Buddhist family one member must of necessity be a Mohammedan. Of a similar, but converse arrangement, a most striking example is told. We passed through the village of Bot Kharbu on our way up to Leh. Here there lives a family of Mohammedan Brogpas, but one member of this family must always be a Buddhist priest of the neighbouring monastery of Lamayuru. Now the Mohammedan is only allowed to eat the meat of an animal that has been *hallalled*, that is to say has had its throat cut, whilst the butcher says "Bismillah—it is the will of God," whereas the Buddhist eats meat killed in any way, so long as he himself has not taken the life of the animal. This family avoids such complications by the simple expedient of cooking all the meat in one pot, irrespective of how the animal has been killed, then inserts a bit of stick into the cooking pot, which is said to separate off *hallalled* meat from *unhallalled*, and all the Mohammedan has to be careful about is that he shall not take meat from the wrong side of the stick. Another method they have of keeping on good terms with the spirit powers of both religions is to make members of successive generations of the same family belong to the religion of Mahomet and the lamas in turn. Thus the Brogpa supplies us with another version of the Vicar of Bray story. Some authorities account

for this extraordinary arrangement by the fact that originally the Dards were Mohammedans, and presumably have not been able entirely to throw off this allegiance. It is stated that in one of their villages, they actually found a burial ground; sure proof to them of a Mohammedan ancestry, for the Buddhist burns his dead, whilst it is the Mohammedan that inters. This may be a satisfactory explanation of their religious ideas, but from whence have they derived all their taboos? Thus the Brogpa must not raise fowl, nor may he eat their eggs. The cow may be employed for the ploughing of his fields, but the gods would most certainly be displeased were he to drink their milk, or even use the butter which is made from the same. In other villages the eating of fish is taboo, and by the look and smell of them washing surely must be also. In fact they avow that it is "Krims med" not the custom. For some time it almost seemed to us as if vaccination was also on their list of prohibitions, for, although they had actually begged us to come for this very purpose, it took the three of us quite a long time cajoling, threatening, entreating and advising them, before they would undergo this fearful operation. At last one faced it, soon to be followed by the others, so that eventually we had quite a busy morning vaccinating. A week later this must have been a sore village, where most of the people wished vaccination had been taboo, but by then we were well away with the knowledge that, should smallpox attack Hanu, it would find the defences fairly strong.

Now let us pay a visit to the Khampas, although it wants a George Borrow to describe these gipsies of Western Tibet. Kham, from whence they come, is a province of Tibet, but when we see the numbers of them who wander over the Indian parts of the Himalayas, we begin to wonder whether any of them are left "at home." Evidently the Khampa finds it more lucrative to wander like our own gipsies than to stay on his native soil. As the bazar in Leh provides most of the things needed by the people who inhabit the upper valley of

the Indus, we do not meet the Khampa much in Ladak, but as soon as we get into Zankskar, he is ubiquitous. Does the lady of those regions need cloth with which to make her shirt, or needle and thread with which to sew it, the Khampa will supply them. Should the bridegroom need a nice button for his coat, he has only to apply to the same source. One of our lady missionaries ran out of needles for her sewing machine, which, moreover, was of a German make, but why worry with Khampas accessible, for, after having supplied the said needles, no doubt the Gipsy said in the approved Tibetan fashion—"And the next, please." But not only does he sell things, he also buys and is especially keen on Zankskari and Spitti ponies. All likely four-year-old ponies are very welcome to him, for whilst he buys them for about Rs 60, he sells them at three or four times that amount down-country. When it comes to horse-dealing he has nothing to learn from his English confrère. We ourselves were anxious to buy a Zankskari pony, but had not succeeded in picking up what we wanted. But one day we struck a Khampa's camp, and thought we would try to get one from them. There at the foot of the hills, on the way down from a high pass, stood five tents in a semi-circle.

The Khampa's tent is quite distinctive. Two ordinary poles which fork above, taken, no doubt, from the poplars which grow in the country, are used as uprights, and across the top of these another is laid over which is stretched a plain piece of canvas, fastened by ropes to wooden pegs or stones. At the bottom of this many hiatuses are left, which are conveniently filled up with the bales containing their merchandise. At the top of the uprights a flag is stuck; this, however, is not placed there to signify the presence of royalty or its representative, but to keep out the evil spirits or to welcome the good. Behind their camp on the hills, their many ponies are seen cropping the grass, and, incidentally giving the order to the camp to move on when all this has been eaten. As we ride

up, the chief gipsy appears. He is a short, stout, healthy-looking young fellow, and his good-natured smile of greeting seems to us to presage a successful deal. He wears long trousers of homespun, and a short jacket of the same material. A Ladaki hat is placed jauntily upon his head, and his rather large earrings make him resemble his Spanish brother still more. He is followed by several others of the same ilk. His spouse, too, makes her appearance, and a nice picture she is. Her happy, jolly, round, fat face shines from the amount of butter with which she has anointed it, and is surmounted by a half-circle of red material with large stones of turquoise matrix inserted. Her well-covered body testifies to good living and plenty of fresh air. There is nothing of the Zenana lady about this dame. Two or three children play happily around her, but their dress is so scanty that one's description may be still more so. We address them with our Ladaki "zhu," and make a few further pleasant remarks. Although our dialect is quite different from theirs, they understand not only ours, but that of most of the people among whom they live and trade. "Have you a pony to sell?" we ask, and are told that they have such marvellous ones for this very purpose, that they defy description, and as for their amble, well, riding them is like sitting in a chair. I am not sure that they did not say *raeil* instead of chair, for anything that has wheels is designated by this Ladaki pronunciation of our English word "rail," even though it be only the missionary's perambulator. "What sort of an amble has this pony of yours?" we next inquire. "A *'Stongyor* of course" comes the rejoinder. Now this needs some explanation. In countries like Ladak, where one has such long treks and few pieces of road that can be trotted on, the most comfortable and least tiring pace a pony can possess is the amble, with the result that if a pony does not have one naturally, he must try to acquire it by having the two legs on the same side tied together. The natural amble is called *stongyor*, which means

" empty amble," for the pony uses it even when he is not ridden, whilst the *labyor* or " learnt amble " can only be obtained when a rider on his back holds the reins fairly firmly, and unfortunately an animal, like his human rider, forgets his lesson in less time than it takes to learn it. A *labyor* therefore minimizes the value of a pony. To come back to our gipsy, he soon sends one or two of his servants for one of the said wonderful animals, which seems as good as its description. But we, too, know something about ponies, and, therefore, request the rider to dismount and drive the pony along empty, with the result that the amble disappears, for it is only a *labyor*. We then inquire the price of the beast, and are told that as a favour we shall have him for Rs160, but as our opinion on this score does not harmonize with his either, no deal results. This does not trouble our friend much, for he knows that by taking the pony down country he will get an even higher sum, and no inhabitant of the Himalayas ever argues that " time is money," or that a quick turnover of cash is a good business proposition.

This roving tribe, originating from Tibet, subscribes to the Buddhist creed. Like our own gipsies they are properly organized, having their own lawful king, and under him Tehsildars (magistrate), headmen and other officials necessary to keep the community in order, and although they are to be met with here, there and everywhere, they seem to be under quite good control.

CHAPTER X

"Curiouser & Curiouser"

YET another trek awaits us, for we have not yet seen the Changpa, the nomad who wanders over the high plateaus of Western Tibet, and the Botpa who is the real inhabitant of the Closed Land. A dispute about the actual boundary between Ladak and Tibet must be settled on the border itself whither the British Joint Commissioner, Major Robson, who holds a watching brief for the Government of India, the Wazir Sahib, who represents his Highness, the Maharajah of Kashmir, and the Doctor Sahib, who accompanies the former, must travel to meet a gentleman who is styled the "Gaspon," and who acts on behalf of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama.

The cause of the dispute was a Ladaki who had settled down in Tibet proper, where he had taken unto himself a lady of the country as wife, and had grown rich. As a result he became liable for the heavy Tibetan taxation, and, wishing to escape this, he returned to Ladak and settled down on his own side of the border. But our Tibetan friends were not to be done out of their taxes quite so easily, for they calmly entered Ladak, seized their man, and took him back again. His brother then appealed to the Kashmir authorities and the Government of India on his behalf, and these naturally objected to such high-handed procedure. Tibet tried to contest the matter by saying that the place from which they had removed the Ladaki was in Tibetan territory, but from

the discussions which were subsequently held at this conference, there seemed to be absolutely no doubt that they had no grounds at all for their contentions.

So off we go one beautiful summer evening from Leh to accomplish our first stage, which happens to be quite an easy one. There is a beauty about the summer evenings and the sunsets, especially in the autumn, of this long stretch of broad valley through which the Indus runs, which must be hard to rival in any other of the world's uplands. The roads we travel do not vary much from others we have described, and a detailed account would be tedious, so let us just look at a picture here and there as we go along.

We are now travelling with the representative of his Majesty the King, one of that splendid set of men working for the good of India and the maintenance of the Empire, of whom we are justly proud. Our reception in each village testifies to the fact of his exalted position. As we enter, we are met by the village band, consisting of two to three kettle-drums, and a similar number of flageolets. High up on the hill overlooking the village stands the monastery, and on the edge of the roof twenty to thirty lamas, silhouetted against the evening sky, are busy with their musical honours, wearing their red priestly robes and those weirdly shaped hats which lamas like to don. At one end are several lamas with big flat drums, measuring about three feet in diameter and about a third of the thickness of an English drum, with a handle attached to the brim so that they are supported by the hand underneath at the level of the waist; in shape they much resemble the old fashioned warming-pan. An ordinary drumstick may be good enough for an Englishman, but here something with a more characteristic shape is preferred, so it is formed like a long sign of interrogation. Next to the drummers are those who clash fine large brass cymbals with a very resonant clang. One of our English friends has made a pair of these into a dinner-gong, and a very imperative

summons they produce. Next come those who blow the flageolets, whilst the further end of the row is assigned to the long shawms, which are so long that, when they are put away, the three parts of which they consist have to be telescoped one into the other. Priestly music must be described elsewhere, but the greeting to the Commissioner consists of single notes blown on shawms, and flageolets, clanged on cymbals, and beaten on drums at the same time, with a slow rhythm. This is not nearly so discordant as might be imagined, and when produced in its own setting seems quite harmonious. Again we are riding across a desert road with a village well to the left. The inevitable band has been sent to the roadside to play us their greeting, but next to them there is a group of four women, gay in their bright red and green, ceremonial or dancing cloaks, lined with long sheep-skins; one holds a pot of local beer, the next a plate of flour, the third a vessel of water, and the last presents glowing embers. One's thoughts almost naturally revert to that scene in the Bible, where Abraham, having followed the army which had carried off his cousin Lot, returning victoriously was met by Melchizedek, King of Salem, with bread and wine. Thus does the unchanging East still keep up its ancient customs, even on the sandy plains of Western Tibet. Abraham no doubt took of the fare provided, but we had not been fighting an enemy, and did not feel the need of sustenance just then. In my politest Tibetan I explained that the Commissioner did not drink *Chang* (the local beer), which harmless and perfectly true remark only produced roars of laughter.

Now we have ascended the Changla, a pass of about 18,000 feet, and to right and left of our road have seen the most wonderful variety of wild flowers. Looking back from the head of the pass, we see about fifty feet below us a large, perfectly purple patch of ground, made up of a mass of wild primulas—surely a remarkable sight at such an elevation.

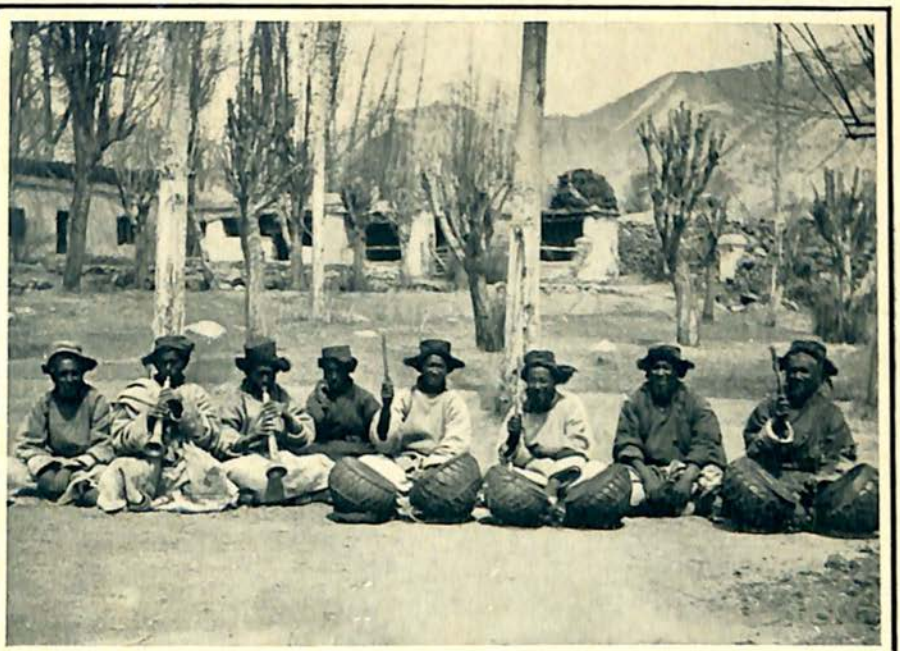
Looking overhead into a clear azure sky we noticed two perfect and complete halos round the sun, and were informed by our servants that these signified either the crossing of the pass by some really great men, or the birth of a King.

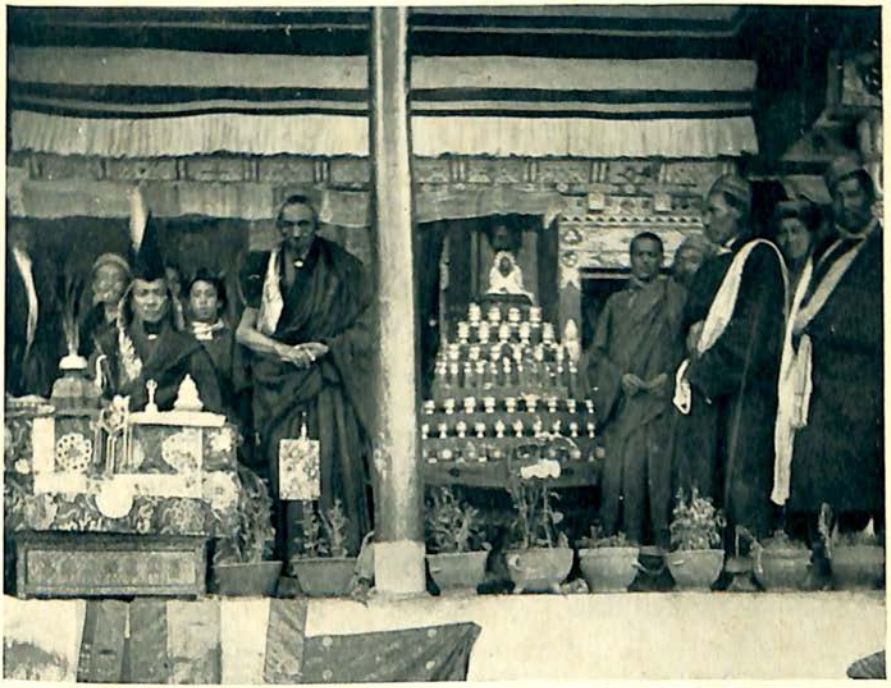
Our camp had been pitched in a sandy plain surrounded by hills, through which a sluggish streamlet meandered, passing within a few yards of our tents. After a cup of tea, partaken of inside our temporary home as a cold wind was blowing outside, and a rest after the day's trek, we emerged for a walk, and to our surprise found that the whole plain had been converted into a lake. Literally within a space of three hours some giant must have dumped down this expanse of water, measuring about two hundred by one hundred and fifty yards. Next morning practically the whole had disappeared, and this seems to have happened daily for weeks. From here we passed over other plains where the same had occurred, till suddenly there lay before us a large green deep lake, from whose banks there rose a row of sandy mountains, behind which glorious snow-covered peaks stood sentinel. This large inland lake, called "The Panggong," runs far into Tibet, and is formed of brackish water. Seen in the morning light, it really is a fine sight.

Leaving it on our right, we reach the village of Pobrang. We may call it a village, for it can boast of two houses, and is certainly the last resort we could designate by such a name, until we get well into Tibet. Here we get our first glimpse of the Changpas or inhabitants of the Northern Plain. Rough and unkempt-looking, they are not altogether the sort of fellows one would like to meet alone by night, but their jolly smile would soon dispel all fears. Let us first describe them, as far as description is possible, and then glance at their dwellings. Their eyes are typically Mongolian, their noses large and firmly flattened. Long hair, which surely has not made the acquaintance of brush and comb for years, if ever, and which ends in a pigtail, surmounts faces

unaccustomed to washing, but well-acquainted with smoky fires. Their long coats reach just below the knees, and are cut without shape or form of any kind. The fronts of these over-lap, and in lieu of buttons they wear a long, broad kammerband round their waists to keep their coats closed. On the lapels of these garments are broad strips of nicely-coloured flannel. The Changpas are shod with long boots reaching up to the knees, red in colour and with very thick soles. Their tents, to European eyes, seem to be just about as ridiculous as tents can be; but then the Changpa does not go into them for protection from the rain as we do, but from the wind. Although in these high uplands there is plenty of rain, for it seemed to be pouring or snowing most of the time we were up there, he considers that the wind is the worse of two evils, for in a high wind you cannot make a fire to boil your tea. He therefore makes his tent so that the wind shall find it difficult to get in, while the smoke of the fire inside shall have an easy egress. To do this he leaves the top of his canvas home absolutely open to the sky. His shelter consists merely of two sides of black cloth made from yak's hair, of which the upper two corners only are fastened together and fixed on the top of upright poles whilst the lower corners are fastened to the ground. These tents are so low that, if the Changpa wants to see what his sheep are doing, he has only to stand up and put his head and shoulders out of his "chimney" to view the landscape, when he resembles nothing more closely than a released jack-in-the-box. Inside their tents these pastoral people sleep, cook their meals, and keep their goods and chattels, while grazing around are their horses, yaks and sheep—a simple life indeed.

Pobrang itself is a very pretty place, consisting of a long stretch of grass lying among sandy mountains with the usual snow-covered peaks behind. Through it there run many delightful rivulets in which the snow-trout are so abundant that in quite a short space of time we pulled out about sixty,





THE TOWN BAND OF LEH

who appeared in the Moravian Mission Compound of their own accord to greet the bride and bridegroom on their return from Church on the rare occasion of a Sahib's wedding in Leh.

A PRIVATE CHAPEL.

The service resembling High Mass being held on the verandah of a " private chapel " in the summer residence of a prominent Tibetan in Leh.

two of which weighed about one pound. And how unsophisticated they were. At first we fished with a kind of larva as bait, but this was scarce, and we had to try how small chunks of mutton would do. They proved successful, and were taken with avidity. We were told that during the autumn the natives caught them in basketfuls, for at that time of the year they go upstream every night, to return in the morning, when they are trapped and then dried, thus providing meat for the winter.

From here we ascended the Kiula Pass, and on our way met our first flock of Changpa sheep, which were slowly grazing their way up the pass. The largest of them was carrying a load, which proved to be the shepherd's bedding and food. The weight did not seem to trouble the sheep at all, nor lessen its enjoyment of the grass. In this country sheep have to carry all sorts of things. Sometimes it is salt for selling in Leh, where its carrier is turned into mutton, and flavoured from its load. At other times it is bales of wool or it may be borax. Our camp that night was pitched at 17,000 feet, and was bitterly cold. This camp really must be described, for it was a fascinating picture.

The camping ground was so small and withal so terribly rocky and uneven, that a Public Health Officer of Camps, did such exist, would have condemned it for overcrowding. There were all sorts and conditions of tents ranging from the imposing ones of the B.J.C., in front of which flew the Union Jack, and the Wazir's, flying the flag of Kashmir, down to the airy tent of the Changpa. To our left were about thirty yaks, laden and ready to start off with our second lot of camp equipment to the next halting place, for now we are travelling *de luxe*, and we like to find our camp ready when we arrive, making it unnecessary to wait exposed to the cold wind. In the centre of the camp are the horses which have brought us to-day, tethered to each other by their forelegs. What are those sheep doing to our left? They look

as if they might be playing a sheepish musical chairs. Actually they have been tied neck to neck, but with alternate heads looking in opposite directions, resulting in such a mix-up of horns, that it looks as though they would never sort out their own again. They are being milked, which done, they are freed by the simple expedient of pulling the end of the rope, when they come undone like a piece of knitting. Looking around the camp we notice sixteen little fires made of *ayug*, the dry root which is found on the mountains, whence also the dried dung is collected for fuel. Round the nearest fire, on which Ladaki tea is boiling, sit four Ladakis; at the side of each lies his bag of barley-flour. From the folds of their ample coats they pull their silver-lined wooden cups. These are filled, and kept filled from the teapot by means of a wooden ladle. Instead of flavouring it with sugar, they take out of small bags some butter to add to their tea, and there is no need to ask "Have you put butter in my tea?" for the appetizing layer of grease floating on the top loudly proclaims the fact. Having quenched their thirst, each man fills his cup with some raw flour from his bag, adds sufficient tea to make a thick paste, and then eats it with his fingers. You ask me how they can possibly enjoy such coarse fare, and I can only reply that judging from their laughter, they evidently do. Whilst we, shivering with cold, stand watching this dinner party, a Changpa strolls up from the river with a can of water. He seems to find the heat oppressive, for he has slipped his right arm out of his sleeve, leaving arm, shoulder and side of chest bare to the gentle breeze. How complex has become our civilization! The Ladaki needs but some dry flour, a little tea, and, with one rug to cover himself by night, is quite happy. If not, he simply takes off his day clothes, which then serve him as blankets by night. If the cold is really bitter three, four, five, six, or even more, sleep together, giving one another warmth. Presumably they do not say "Last in bed puts out the light," but "Last

in bed sleeps on the outside," as the outside bed-fellow has one side relatively exposed. Sleep at an altitude of about 17,000 feet is fugitive, in fact neither of us got much that night, and, even when it did come, we woke up with a most disagreeable sensation, as if somebody were sitting on our chests so that we could not properly fill them with air.

We have finally arrived at Drogpo Karpo, where the conference is to take place. This is a large grassy plain, surrounded by snow mountains, at the further end of which the camp is pitched. In the centre are the tents of the Commissioner and Wazir with their respective flags. In front of these stands a square tent nicely carpeted, in which are a table and chairs. This is to serve as conference room. We had arrived a little before time, and before the Tibetans. They, however, turned up soon afterwards, and presented quite an impressive sight, as they rode, two and two, into camp. First came, not the standard bearer, but the Umbrella-of-State-Bearer. After these some soldiers, although we should not have recognized them as such, had we not inquired as to their function, for there was nothing very martial about them, save the muzzle-loaders they bore. They wore the usual dressing-gown coats of homespun held together round the waist by a big kammerbund, red Wellington boots with very thick soles and hats shaped somewhat like lemon squeezers. These were followed by various members of the staff, then the great man himself, whilst still others followed him. Having settled themselves into their quarters, the Wazir sent a message across to say that H.H. the Maharajah desired them to regard themselves as his guests. They on their part sent a delegation with twenty-five bricks of tea, and a piece of *snambu* (homespun) with the request that a time be fixed when their chief representative, the Gaspon, could come to pay his respects. Punctually to time he arrived. His dress consisted of a lovely blue skirt, and a Chinese coat of the same colour which was buttoned up to his neck. His

hat was the same shape as that of the London messenger boy only with the addition of a large brim which was turned up all round, and on the top was a red knob made of coral. From the lobe of one of his ears depended an elongated ear-ring made of turquoises. It would take a professional reporter of fashions to describe all the various kinds of hats worn, but perhaps the most favoured head-gear was an English felt hat, worn the wrong way round,—as it would be in this country,—that is the ordinary long axis going across the head. Others liked to flatten them into a round shape, like a padre's hat. Then there were hats made of papier mâché in almost any shape that might occur to the fancy. The Tehsildar seems to have desired to create the impression that he was wearing a *chorten* on his head, whilst the Gaspon's little son preferred the idea of a candle snuffer.

On arrival the Gaspon placed a salutation scarf round the neck of the Commissioner. Photographs were then taken, after which we entered the conference tent, where we sat round a table, and, by means of an interpreter some kind of conversation was sustained:—the word "sustained" is used advisably, for even our Ladaki servants who speak the language of Western Tibet, cannot understand these representatives from the forbidden land, so special interpreters are needed. Next to me sat a jolly old lama on whom I tried to air my Tibetan. He evidently could understand just sufficient to be thoroughly amused. He had quite a jovial face, and was evidently no ascetic, but resembled much more the good old English friar, so often represented in pictures engaged in piscatorial pleasures. Needless to say more presents were given. Business began next day, but one regrets to have to report that it was impossible to make our friends from across the border see reason, and so there was finally nothing for it, but to exchange still more presents, and to return to our various homes.

CHAPTER XI

Domesticities

THE homes of Ladak, with the exception of those in its metropolis, Leh, and perhaps in the small town of Kargil, in Purig, are practically all village homes. In these desert uplands a village must centre round a stream, which brings its contribution from the glaciers of the great heights—ever in the background—to one of the smaller rivers, most of which eventually flow into the Indus. Where such a stream runs through a broadening valley, it is possible to lay out a series of terraced fields, which can be irrigated in turn by directing the supply into small artificial water-courses. Indeed the turns for sharing the precious water are often the subject of much quarrelling, hoarse shouting and invective, while some less fortunate inhabitants have sometimes to stay up all night to water their fields. Above the area of cultivated terraces, and at the foot of the actual hills, where it is too rocky and steep to plough and sow, the houses are clustered, approached by stony paths or tracks, and so built into the hillside that convenient pieces of rock are often used for wall or floor, and, where the rock overhangs, even for roof, while a little sunny platform will be enclosed with a rough wall to stable the animals by day in winter. The setting of roof and balcony is always arranged to catch the maximum sunshine, so that even in the low temperatures of winter, many domestic activities can be carried on out-of-doors. Crowning the chief hill of the village, and dominating its common life, as its position would suggest, is the monastery.

Usually perched on almost inaccessible crags, from its commanding elevation it can not only view the activities of the field-workers in the terraces below, but can discern the whole domestic life of roof and yard at its feet.

The road both enters and leaves the village through a *Chorten* gate. Suppose a child sets up two plain bricks with a third across the top, and on this placed a fat Chess pawn, he would have quite a good model of these *chorten*-crowned archways. But these are still more fascinating and picturesque in spring, when surrounded by apricot-trees in full blossom and seen against a background of azure sky and glittering peaks, for the snow then is still low on the mountains. Between entrance and exit, the road is usually just a rough path trodden out at the base of the hill, with the fields below and the houses above, varied here and there by a rough bridge of logs covered with stones and mud, and by an occasional water-course which must be jumped as it carries its clear ice-cold water along. The stables for ponies or cattle, who are brought into the bottoms of the houses by night, in winter at any rate, may be enclosures roughly walled in by stones, balanced on each other to a height of four to six feet. These rough walls are also built as boundaries to fields, where there is no natural delimitation, as by the edge of a terrace, or to enclose small orchards of apricot and apple-trees, or even to fence in a "bagh," that is, a small plantation of trees, whose wood is so precious, and whose luscious bark attracts the cattle. A slight push with the hand topples over enough wall to make a convenient gap, easily replaced, for entrance and exit, and, after the winter months, during which the donkeys and sheep, and especially the nimble goats, are allowed to wander at will picking up such bits of roots and fodder as they only know how to find, there are few walls that do not need rebuilding. Round the edges of the growing cornfields throughout the summer cows and goats may be seen feeding on the scant grass, always either tethered or led by a small

child or perhaps by a mother with one or two children in her wake. A few houses are also scattered here and there among the fields, while in a larger village, many families have also a "country seat." This *yarsa*, or summer-place, usually consists of a small hut with a stable below, and a kitchen-room above, leading on to a balcony or flat roof. These may be on the outskirts of the village, or a mile or two up the valley behind. Anywhere on the hillsides, not too far distant from the rest of the community, where a spring or brook is available to water a small patch of cultivated land, these *yarsas* may be found, while in a large village such as Kalatse a considerable proportion of the population move in the summer away to the hills, taking their cattle with them to the so-called *brogs*.

Coming back to the village one often notices a little roofed balcony placed over the front-door, containing its three miniature *chortens*, coloured red, white and blue, with its demoniacal gods crudely painted on the wall behind. Near the house a young girl may be seen with a small stone in her hands pressing out the oil of apricot-kernels on a large flat boulder with a hole in the middle, into which the fluid runs. This oil is used for cooking purposes, for dressing the hair, and for burning in the little vessels before the altar. On the high road we have met in early summer donkeys and ponies loaded with sackfuls of these apricot kernels, proceeding down to Kashmir to sell them for the same purposes. They come from Baltistan, where the best apricots of this part of the world grow, and one can picture the inhabitants sitting out in the winter sunshine, when there is no field-work to occupy them, and cracking open the innumerable stones necessary to fill all these sacks with kernels. The seeds of a species of mustard plant are used for the same three purposes, though the mustard-oil is not so strong as that of the apricot.

In the house of the headman of the village, and in many of the better-class homes of the town, one room is dedicated as a little private chapel, used chiefly by the master of the house

for reading his holy books and repeating his prayers. Here, too, the lamas are accommodated when they are sent for to come and "do religion" in the house. Their presence can be detected from afar by the monotonous beat of their drums, while nearer at hand the sound of their chanting can be heard. At such times, lasting one or two days, the priests must be both fed, and paid in money.

Where a whole room cannot thus be set apart for religious purposes, a small corner in the best room will be arranged as an altar with all the necessary paraphernalia of ritual. These include the brass vessels for burning oil, vases containing peacock feathers, and chased vessels of brass, copper or silver or combinations of these to hold the rice, barley and other offerings. Quaintly-shaped vessels for holy water, small idols in metal cases, with a tiny window in front and slots at the side through which string may be passed to tie them round the waist when travelling, salutation-scarves of wide meshed raw silk, little bits of tawdry rags, doubtless blessed by some Skushog, and one or two sacred books in their long covers also find a place there.

One has often noticed in Mussulman homes that the best room is always used by the head of the house if he falls sick, and in most houses the best gowns and coats, especially the headman's, adorn its walls, along with soiled Turkish towels hanging on rough pegs. But surely the best and brightest room is most conducive to a successful toilet and effective ablutions!

The ordinary inhabitant, however, who only gives his religion an average place, and who cannot afford many lamaistic luxuries, generally has to make a living-room of his best room, though as we have already indicated most houses have a large bright room upstairs for use in summer. The greater part of the side of this is a window space, framed in wood with three or four longitudinal partitions, each of which can be filled to any height desired for warmth or privacy by

fitting a series of short horizontal boards into the slots cut in the sides of the framework. The big family stove is built of a special black mud, deposited at the bottoms of rivers or streams, or dug from under the damp turf on their banks, which becomes very hard when dried. The stove is roughly square in form, with a hole at two or more corners round which the hard mud is raised into three upward projections, thus supporting the local rounded cooking-pots. These are made of copper and tinned over by the local blacksmith. We Europeans have to be very careful to have this lining kept intact to avoid copper poisoning, but one often finds the Ladaki brewing his tea in a pot from which all traces of tin have long ago vanished. Perhaps this is why we are so often upset when we accept invitations to meals in their houses. In front of the stove on the right-hand side is a projection of the same hardened mud, which is to accommodate the right-hand of the " fire blower," as he operates on the bellows. These are very effective instruments with a large nozzle pushed well under the glowing fuel, and an elongated bag of goat-skin at the outer end of which two small bars of wood are attached, with small loops of strongly-twisted thread in the middle. Through these the thumb and fingers are placed to open and close the mouth, and though it sounds and looks a simple process a certain knack must be acquired to get a good fire. Children of the house often keep it going, but the fire-blower is generally a sooty-faced, ragged woman servant, the counterpart of the old scullery-maid in the West. The stove has a large central tunnel with branches radiating out to the corner holes, and in the middle is a depression for the biggest hole of all.

Here the large pot of butter-tea is generally brewing. The tea, of which the best variety comes from Lhasa (where it is used as coinage) in bricks, is stewed for some hours, then mixed up in a special churn, phonetically named a *gurgur*, with butter, soda, salt and milk. Some writers have said our

Tibetan friends prefer rancid butter, but in Ladak at any rate, those who can afford to be so are most particular that the butter shall be fresh, never melted previously, and without a strong smell. The resulting concoction to us tastes more like soup, and few Westerners can stand more than one or two cups without disastrous results. For the Tibetan on the other hand it is one of his staple foods, its butter helps to supply the carbo-hydrates which he so rarely takes in the form of sugar, though he gets plenty of starch from his uncooked barley-flour, mixed with water or tea. The fat also warms and sustains him in the bitter winter, and as this separates out if allowed to cool but slightly, his cup is supplied with a metal lid and saucer if he moves in better circles, and his wife or attendant constantly adds hot tea as soon as there is any room to fill up. In this way over twenty cupfuls may be taken at one midday meal. For us it is a very trying custom when we visit our Ladaki friends, and we have to explain that, just as much of our tea (fortunately for us !) upsets them, so our internal economy can only deal with a small supply of their favourite beverage ! Another difficulty for us is to sit cross-legged on the floor for so long, and, although we know it is bad manners to stretch out legs, eventually when stiff knees or needles and pins become intolerable, we have to ask our host or hostess to excuse the position. To return to the fireplace —we find the seats of election are on the side of the stove opposite the bellows, for here is a little trough into which the hot ashes are pushed through from the other side, as aeration necessitates. Squatting cross-legged on mats round these hot embers, which can be constantly raked over with a rough fire-spoon or even the hardened fingers of our native friends, we can stretch our hands out over the warmth, and renew the glowing vitality by occasionally leaning over to give a few good blows. This cosy corner is, of course, the warmest at night, and given to either the weakest or most distinguished member of the household. The Doctor Memsahib once had

the privilege of coming upon a family unawares just at dawn in the middle of winter. She had been called out to a case in a village, nine miles from Leh, the last two miles of which had to be done in the dark, that is by snow and starlight, and she and her Ladaki nurse were glad to walk over the frozen snow a little to keep their feet from freezing. Already icicles stretched from upper to lower eye-lashes, and whiskers, formed by the frozen moisture of their breath, adorned their mouths. The patient's friends had sent for the Doctor three days too late ; already two small lives were extinct, and the last dim hope of the mother lay in a surgical interference. An operation was performed, after sterilizing instruments in a cooking pot by the light of a fire of sticks on the mud floor, the nurse giving chloroform for the first time. But it was too late and, at about two a.m., the patient died. We sat on till the first dim light appeared, for out-of-doors we feared wolves in the dark, and a strange experience it was. On one side of the room the corpse covered with sacking and filthy sheepskin, near the fire on the floor quietly sobbing, was the unkempt, shaggy, ragged husband, who, for all his uncouth appearance, had exhibited the most extraordinary tenderness and patience with his suffering wife ; near the stove his mother-in-law, a wrinkled old hag, who wailed intermittently. On the further side of the stove hens nestled. In the next cold fireless room two children were sleeping, and we were told that downstairs a blind old grandfather had been put in the straw cellar (again the " wrong way round " compared with our hayloft in the West) to keep warm in the horses' fodder. The Ladaki nurse spread her coat, lined with sheepskin in the corner by the stove for her Doctor, and fetched a thick horse-cover for herself. The fire of manure in the stove had gone out, and the two mourners occasionally added sticks to the one on the floor, but the room was bone cold. The family were so poor that they had not offered us even a warm drink during the long, bitter night, though, when they thought we were drowsing,

they themselves took a little barley-and-water soup. Nor was there a cup from which we should have cared to drink, so our supper consisted of one and a half buns each, which the Memsahib had hastily crammed into a pocket. As soon as it was light enough to see, we crept out of that chamber of death into the crisp freshness of the morning air, leaving our ponies and saddlebags to be sent afterwards, and made our way over the hard snow to the nurse's home, which happened fortunately to be in the same village. Here, then, we roused the family from where they slept, all together in the big kitchen-room. The old grandmother was in the cosy corner, cuddling up a little grandchild, and other members had their bedding on the floor round the room, the head of the house and his wife being in an adjacent chamber. The latter was soon blowing the bellows, and the nurse made a hot native soup for the Doctor Memsahib; and how welcome it was with its tiny wormlike rolls of flour and water in the steaming broth. Later on chupattis and butter-tea were prepared for the family breakfast, which was served about nine o'clock, the women clustering near the big stove, the men warming themselves round a fire of sticks kindled on the floor near by, and the head of the home doing a little spinning as he waited for his meal. In this establishment the old grandmother, a widow, had been assigned separate rooms in the house, so that she could live quite independently if she pleased. It is quite usual when the son of the house marries and has reached years of discretion, for his parents to retire if they wish to do so. Then all the possessions are divided into three parts, the parents retaining one, whilst the other two go to the eldest son. When the parents die, he also gets their share. Finally everything really belongs to the heir, but he is responsible for seeing that the other members of the family have sufficient provision.

But before we leave the family group round the fire, let us inquire a little more into the nature of their meals, and some

of the customs concerned in the partaking thereof. The better class Ladaki always washes his face and hands before eating. The Buddhist also performs his particular kind of grace before meals. First he takes a little of his flour which he throws away for the gods. Then he dips his ring-finger and thumb into his tea or *chang* (beer), and flips a taste of that away for their benefit, too. He uses the ring-finger as he considers this the cleanest of his digits, for man is born with this finger in his nose. If he wishes to stir anything, he uses this same member. If for his meal he has killed a sheep, he is supposed to offer up a bit of its heart, kidney, liver and every part of its flesh to his god. But meat is rather a luxury for the normal household, yet they have many ways of cooking it which are really delicious. When a *dron* or feast is made, the meat is of course, prepared as a very tasty curry to be eaten with rice, the meat being first fried with plenty of cooking-butter and onions, then stirred for hours till it is really tender in a well-flavoured sauce with plenty of vegetables. The rice is served, piled up on enormous plates, each of which two or three guests will attack, unless they have brought their own normal sized plates. The grander ones then eat with small spoons, the man's being a different shape from the woman's, as the latter is double, the second tiny receptacle at one end being for a child. It is not etiquette to finish up what is on the plate—in most cases it would be impossible; the mother especially must take a large portion home for the rest of the family. The feast is usually begun with butter-tea, and, if so, when the plates of rice and meat have been removed, it is quite good manners in some circles to clean out the cup with one's tongue (much more labour-saving than our ways of washing up !), ready to have it filled with stewed dried apricots. After this course, the same cleansing process will prepare the cup for more filling of butter-tea ! "Chupattis," that is, round flat cakes of unleavened bread, are generally served too, and dipped into the apricot juice or the tea. At a very grand

feast, proceedings may begin with *gyatug*, a dish of long vermicelli-like strips of flour-paste over which mincemeat in a nicely flavoured sauce is poured. Meat is also minced and made into delicious little dumplings, called *mok mok*, or well-flavoured and rolled up into sausages, which are eaten with rice—in fact in a rich house, after the plates of rice have been served, many kinds of subsidiary dishes are handed round with meat done up in different ways, sauces and vegetables, the last often soured. For a *dron* an experienced cook is hired to take charge of all the culinary operations, usually a Mussulman, otherwise one of the women of the house superintends the kitchen. But in the villages where there are no butcher shops, and a sheep is killed only occasionally, the staple food is butter-tea and barley-flour, varied with all sorts of vegetables prepared in several ways. The poorest people mix the flour in water just as it is, eating it out of cheap little wooden cups with their fingers.

An ordinary middle class family will breakfast on butter-tea and small breads, raised with leaven called *kambir* ; at midday they will have more tea, and perhaps chupattis with a sauce of vegetables, mixed with buttermilk, while in the evening, tea may or may not be served again with flour kneaded into a paste in some form or other, and mixed with meat well stewed in a broth.

More usually as the hot tea is drunk, the butter floating on the top is blown to one side, and after many cups a nice little residue is left with which to mix up the raw flour with the aid of a finger.

In summer when milk is more plentiful, its various products are much used as a food. The milk is collected into a large pot at night and warmed, some sour buttermilk being added to make it curdle. The pot is then covered with garments and blankets so as to maintain the blood-heat for proper fermentation. Some of it may be set aside to eat as *zho*, this being a kind of junket, only less insipid, especially when well

made of creamy milk; it then has a delicious fruity flavour with a slight suggestion of wine. By early morning the *zho* in the large pot will have set, and the house-mother must rise early to churn it. She has a long instrument with leather fans on the end, which must be kept twirling in the pot, and it is a matter of some skill both to keep the curdled milk at the right temperature by adding hot or cold water, and to twist the churn at the correct rate. An experienced housewife eventually separates out a fine cone of yellow butter, while in the pot the sour buttermilk is left, the remainder of which, after having retained enough for the household's needs, is taken to the bazar to be sold. It is used for various kinds of food. Vegetables, which we would consider weeds, are collected from garden and field, washed, boiled, washed again, then kneaded, fried with onions and added to the *darra* or buttermilk. This mixture is used as a sauce with *zan* or *baba*, which is made by boiling the milled flour of roast wheat, barley and peas into a mash. The peas are like our English ones, but harder and more flavourless. The milk curds when set are also hung up in a bag, and after all the whey has dripped out and the curd dried, it is well pressed and cut into strips,—perhaps fried in butter and used in soup. From Yarkand come dried curds of horses' milk, which is also used for this purpose. Other changes in diet are afforded by mixing barley-flour into paste with a little *chang* or native beer, and allowing it to ferment. This is then dipped into and eaten with more *chang*. Another delicacy is made by mixing good butter, sugar and, perhaps, currants into a paste and eating it with chupattis like jam. At the New Year a special dish is provided by making a round flat barley-cake, and pouring a little butter into a hole in the middle.

All this use of flour, whether of wheat or barley, presupposes the long processes of cleaning the grain, shaking it up and down on a *shupu* (a kind of straw tray), so that the loose husks blow away, and the little stones and odd bits which get

swept up with it from the threshing-floor are easily separated, washing it, spreading it out in the sun to dry, watching it the while so that birds do not steal it, then sending it to the miller in large sacks, and sitting to watch it being milled so that none is stolen by him, for which cause the flour should also be weighed before and after grinding. The mill itself is as effective as it is simple. Below is a large flat stone, above and resting upon it is another, connected with a paddle on which the water impinges, thus driving it. In the centre of the upper mill-stone there is a hole through which the grain drops from a cone-shaped basket, getting thus between upper and nether mill-stone. To keep the cereal running gently, a goat's horn is attached to the basket and allowed at its other end to touch the rotating stone, whose roughness keeps the basket gently shaking. A trough is dug round the edge of the circular mill-stones, and in this the flour collects. The whole is picturesquely housed in a little stone and mud hut, which is placed over a rapidly flowing watercourse, the momentum of which is increased by a sudden drop before entering the mill.

CHAPTER XII

Modes & Manners

THE most important domestic work next to the preparation of food is spinning, and it is rare to visit a house without finding some man or woman busy with wool. First of all the raw wool has to be procured. The majority of this comes from the Chang-tang, the great " Northern Plain " beyond Leh, on the way to Greater Tibet, but some comes from Yarkand, and there are many varieties and qualities of it. The best wool, called *lena*, is of soft, silky texture, and is the short downy growth near the skin of the goat, which grows in winter under the long shaggy hairs, and is removed for export in summer. A still finer quality of camel-coloured wool can be obtained from the breast and neck of the Tibetan antelope, but as twenty to thirty of these animals have to be captured in order to procure one *batti* of this wool (a common measurement in Ladak, equal to four English pounds), the price of this quantity is about Rs20, in the raw state, so the textile products, though exquisitely fine and soft, are expensive and rare. The ordinary soft *lena* wool is sent in large quantities to Kashmir, where it is known as *pashmina* and is woven into the celebrated Cashmere shawls. At the time of the great Mogul Emperors, Mirza Hedar, grandfather of the celebrated Akbar, came to Ladak from Yarkand with five hundred men, and paid a long visit to the King. At the latter's request, he conquered the country of Purig, and presented it to his host, then went on down to Kashmir and

subdued it for himself. The Ladaki King sent him some *Snambu* or Ladaki home-spun, woven of *lena*, as a present, and he admired it so much that he introduced the import of the wool into Kashmir. He is said to have had it woven into the first two shawls, or *shal*, the word meaning "a board," a name which he seems to have given them *faut de mieux*, for it hardly suits such essentially fine soft cloth. Two Persians then came to Kashmir to buy saffron and cummin, and bought these shawls to take back to present to their King. Next year they tried to obtain more; later the cloth was taken also to Alexandria, and so its fame slowly became world-wide. Thus these delicate soft shawls are really derived from the protection which nature has given to our long-haired Himalayan goats to withstand the excessive cold on the roof of the world.

But we must return to the large part played by wool in the domestic activities of Ladak. First of all the raw product, arriving in rough twists, must be cleaned. If it is washed in water, the resulting cloth or *snambu* is said not to be so nice, but sometimes there is no choice, for the wool may be so impregnated with fatty grease that it has to be taken to the nearest spring or clear-running water to be cleansed, though it must never be squeezed or rubbed in the process. Sometimes it is further cleaned with white chalk from the cliffs near by, with which it is well mixed, then teased out. The next process, or *malches*, consists of the pulling out of the wool, and teasing out all little bits of tangled, extraneous matter, so that it is quite soft and ready to spin. Then comes the actual *kalches* or spinning, which is carried out on a slender cone of wood, elongated at both ends, called a *p'ang*. The end of this is supported in a little cup, either hollowed out of a small block of wood, or, what is infinitely preferable, made of the kernels of apricot-stones after all the oil has been pressed out, leaving a hard matrix or kind of oil-cake. The left hand manipulates the *p'ang*, twisting it to and fro in its little cup,

while the right hand feeds the wool on to the spindle and pulls it out into long threads. These two activities of *malches* and *kalches* are the constant occupations of the women in their homes, and do not hinder them from keeping their eyes on the family dinner cooking on the stove, or on the babies crawling round the floor. Spinning is continued also while they sit on the roof with their neighbours, gossiping and watching the happenings on the adjacent house-tops. Even to purdah Mussulman ladies, who are not too strict, the roof is available. Roof-land in the East is the woman's special domain, where she can gather all the news, and witness many an interesting street scene, the participants little thinking of the fair eyes enjoying all the thrills of their quarrellings from their vantage-point behind the tiny slits or windows in the low walls which sometimes surround the flat roof. More often, however, the roofs of the houses, whose owners keep ponies, have a light wall all round, made with bundles of lucerne which slowly dry there, and in this land of scanty rainfall remain in good condition until the next harvest, adding a picturesque touch to the appearance of the dwelling.

After the wool has been spun on to the *p'ang* it is taken off from two of the latter, placed side by side, and wound on to a ball. Then they are twisted together on to another *p'ang*, which has a little wooden disk attached to one end. This process of *zhuches* is combined with the *kalches* by many spinners, but if done separately, the resulting home-spun is less likely to be crooked or to pull and give in the wrong directions. Another advantage of doing the twisting alone is that it may be done in the bazar while the ladies spend the afternoon marketing. Having arrived with baskets on their backs, filled with the little local vegetables grown in their small gardens or weeded out from their cornfields, their twisting is also brought, and a lot of wool can be prepared while they stand about or squat on the ground, talking to their fellow-vendors in the intervals between attending to their

customers. A much quicker way to get on with the twisting is to attach the wool to hooks on the roof from which the spindles are suspended. Then, sitting on the ground with four or more spindles in a row, each in turn may be given a twist with the hand, and so four or five balls can be twisted up in less time than one. Where there is an industrious housewife, large balls of wool may be seen hanging from the roof or even out in the fresh air of the balcony, where the fish insects are less likely to get them, ready for the coming of the weaver. If a very fine cloth is required, the balls are first soaked in water to shrink and harden them. The warp is prepared out in the road where there is a nice level stretch, and an experienced weaver walks up and down its length, arranging the threads and directing his assistants. The warp is then wound on a roller and transferred to a machine for weaving. The woof is made from the wool of three *p'angs* twisted together and passed in and out on a shuttle. The weaving machine is a very primitive-looking affair, worked by a treadle, and the resulting *snambu* is little over a foot wide, so that a Ladaki garment has many longitudinal seams. But before sewing, the cloth must be shrunk, and a whole day is spent trampling it on a flat stone selected for the purpose in a running watercourse. This decreases its width by another three or four inches. It is then wound on a smooth stick and rolled up and down for about an hour by way of mangling it, and finally spread out in the sun to dry. If it is to be used for a woman's or a lama's dress, it still has to be dyed the necessary dark red.

For sewing clothes a special man is generally employed, but rough mending anyone will do, especially the men. Both sexes also help in the regular irrigation of the crops in summer, and the other agricultural occupations in their season. There are the cattle to tend, in which occupation the children are so useful ; some of the male members may travel about the country trading, while there is always the bugbear

of supplying for the forced labour on the road, exacted in lieu of taxation from each village.

So we see there is plenty to do even on the roof of the world, and we must not grudge the man of the house his leisure when he sits down to have a restful pull at his hookah, the favourite pipe of the East, passing it round for the other men, and even some of the women, to have a turn. As their hands intervene between their mouths and the mouthpiece, this is not so unhygienic a sharing as it sounds. Sometimes the snuff-box will be passed round, too, and in the villages snuff or ash for this purpose may easily be procured by collecting and burning a kind of broom from the hillside. If your friendly "hubble-bubble" has been left behind, a pipe can easily be arranged by making a hole in the ground, tunnelling a passage into it, then pushing in a hollowed piece of wood as your mouthpiece. Now place your tobacco into the hole, get on your knees, bend down, light up, and there you are.

Let us look at our pigtailed friend as he bends over his pipe. Down the back of his natural-coloured garment is a long greasy mark where his pigtail rubs on it. The pigtail itself is continued by wool when the hair gives out, and his big wide *skerag*, a long woollen sash about six inches wide and six feet long, bound in many turns round the waist with the ends tucked in, is wound over it, so as to keep it in place. This *skerag*, as we have already seen elsewhere, is a repository for many articles, either stuck in the back or depending from the front, or, like the little wooden travelling-cup, placed inside its voluminous folds. Another repository for accommodating the cup or other precious things may be termed the breast-pocket, for it is entered where the coat folds over in front of the chest. But before we leave the pigtail and its greasy mark, we must learn that a Ladaki gentleman likes to have his hair washed about once a month, a process during which he must sit with his head on a wooden support, while his wife or nearest female relation carries out the ablutions with soda

and warm water. There is something very ludicrous in the sight of an aged be-whiskered man-servant, coming to his daily work with his long hair hanging round his shoulders to dry, but the sun soon does its work, and the hair can be well oiled with apricot or mustard-oil, and plaited up again. The ordinary fur-lined Ladaki hat with its turned-up corners is of Indian origin, though the long robe comes from China. If the corner of the hat is turned down, it signifies that the wearer is in mourning; while if the whole thing is worn jauntily at an angle, it is the sign of a true dandy. Before the great war the words "Made in Germany" were often seen on a hat, generally upside down, but to the wearer it was illegible, and regarded as a nice pattern selected from the edge of the roll of cloth. It is quite good manners to use the corners of one's dress as a handkerchief, turning it up to blow the nose on the inner side. When a great occasion demands smart clothing, it is also quite correct to borrow whatever is necessary from a friend.

The outstanding feature of a Ladaki woman's appearance is the extraordinary arrangement of hair and head-dress. The latter is called a *perag*, the first part of the word being an old name for turquoise.

In olden times the women of this country wore a round head-dress like that which adorns the lady of Purig or of Central Tibet, until a Ladaki King brought his royal consort from a small state in the closed land where the *perag* was the national head-dress, and the ladies of his realm at once copied their new Queen. The *perag* consists of a central elongated piece of leather, covered with red cloth, converging slowly to a long narrow point below the waist behind, and a shorter blunt one in front. The whole thing is supposed to represent a snake, and the front part appearing over the forehead certainly resembles the head of the cobra. On this bright red background rows of turquoise matrix are sewn, often ending in front with a chased gold and silver ornament,

studded with small turquoises. Sometimes a large red cornelian also varies the apex. This would seem startling enough, but unfortunately a later Queen had an attack of earache, so attached a large piece of black lambskin each side to protect her ears. The court ladies must do likewise, so now every *perag* is accompanied by these large ear-flaps, and the *coiffure* is most wonderfully adapted to them by plaiting the hair into a number of small plaits, which are sewn into the ear-pieces at each side, and continued with wool down the back on both sides of the *perag* to unite below in a large tassel, which reaches to the bottom of the skirt. To one side of the *perag* a projection of silver from which rows of coral-beads depend is also fastened. This is said to represent the serpent's tail, though it seems to us to have become rather dislocated. In the villages there are only a few rows of turquoise on the average woman's *perag*, but the town ladies are very resplendent, and their head-dresses become so heavy with stones that they sometimes support them by a broad black tape passing under the armpits. The central portion is taken off at night, and sometimes when at work in the house, leaving the ear-pieces in place, stitched to the hair, for so elaborate a *coiffure* can only be taken down once a month, when the hair is washed, oiled and done up anew. For this process in the town a lady hairdresser attends, getting four to eight annas a day, and in addition food of the feasting standard. In the country the women have to oblige each other. Also occasionally the whole *perag* has to be taken to pieces, a new red cloth substituted, and the turquoises resewn, during which time the proud owner of a brilliant head-dress has to be content with her ordinary fur-lined hat. Small girls sometimes begin with a skimpy little *perag* at the age of five or six, bearing a single row of turquoises in front and ending in cowrie shells behind. The latter are slowly replaced as funds permit, and cowries should only be worn by unmarried girls. By the time she is grown up, a girl

should thus have quite a good sized *perag*, which functions as her dowry, in fact she regards it as her bank, for she invests money in turquoises as a provision for widowhood or old age. The mother's *perag* usually goes to the eldest daughter at her marriage, after which the mother must be content with a small one. As the eldest son inherits all land property, so the eldest daughter inherits all ornaments. Unfortunately the number and size of the turquoises on a head-dress are a source of great jealousy, and a lady with a very resplendent *perag* is often one of suspicious morals. In olden times the ladies of high rank in Ladak all wore ear-flaps of sable, brought from beyond Yarkand, but now these are seen only on the Queen and the old Queen Mother. Another custom traceable to a royal indisposition is that of wearing a large gold and silver ornament in front of the neck at weddings. This originated from the desire of a Queen on such an occasion to hide a goitre which disfigured her neck.

The women also have many other ornaments. Ear-rings of seed-pearls, threaded on a large wire hoop, which passes round the whole ear, with one or two turquoises and corals at the bottom of the circle. Necklaces composed of little chased gold amulet boxes, interspersed with coral and turquoise, or other less elaborate ones, made with red beads and little silver ornaments. Silver chatelaines worn on the breast, with picks for nose, ears, teeth and other purposes, and large round brass ornaments at the waist from which leather threads pass to a brass needle-case, to the other side of which are attached a number of chains of cowries, also threaded on leather. Finally bracelet-cuffs, made of chased silver or white shell, used to knock together in salutation but also convenient for keeping back the long sleeves.

Here is another custom the reverse of ours, for whereas European women wear short sleeves, in summer at any rate (the Ladakis probably think this must be to economize stuff), both men and women in this country have them cut very

BALTI COOLIES.

They carry peculiar sticks in their hands on the march, like a short crutch with rather a long cross-piece at the top. When they stop to rest, they pass the stick behind and under the load, so that it takes the weight off their backs.

A LADAKI WEDDING GROUP,

Shewing the rich Chinese robe of the bridegroom and his high tinsel-covered hat. He wears his nuptial white scarf and a gold amulet box studded with turquoises. His little wife is rather obscured by her large cape lined with sheepskin.

much longer than their arms. In winter this is very useful, as the hands can be threaded in the opposite sleeve to keep warm, and any surplus length in a man can always be turned back as a cuff. A woman's trousers are also far longer than her legs, and look very peculiar garments when spread out to dry. But the concertina-like creases into which they fold when worn, and which come right down to the ankle, add all the more warmth in winter. An unmarried girl wears white trousers, but a married woman must wear black, at any rate after the birth of her first son. A woman's *skerag* or waistband is also wide and very long, and wound round her very tightly. Her gown is shaped rather differently from a man's—the bodice and skirt being cut separately, and the latter sewn on to the former with very full pleats, and if it is a best dress the whole is edged with an effective little narrow binding of gay pattern. Occasionally she thinks to enhance her beauty by using the small berries of a common weed, and sticking them all over the upper part of her face, where they look like little yellow spots. These berries are also said to relieve headache, and withdraw superfluous serum. We must also mention the head-dress of the Mussulman women in Leh, for the town contains a large proportion of them. The *perag* is rightly considered an emblem of an idolatrous religion, and should be discarded on changing over to Mohammedanism. Then a white head-dress covering over a little round foundation cap, and hanging in folds to below the waist, is worn. In front is an ornament which may be quite costly, of seed-pearls and turquoises, often arranged to form the sign of the crescent.

Now we come to those important members of the home, the children, and it would be hard to find more fascinating little persons than the elfish little sprites whom we meet in Ladak. To our Western eyes the flattened face and large cheeks of a Mongolian type of baby are particularly quaint.

When Baby is coming, in contrast to the complicated

layettes over which the occidental mother spends so many loving hours, no preparations of clothing are made, but as soon as he has arrived safely, some cloth is fetched from the bazar in which to wrap him. Before his birth his mother must eat a great deal of fat to "oil the wheels" well for his arrival. One other preparation has been made, for goat's dung has been collected, dried (and incidently somewhat sterilized) in the hot sun, then crushed up finely. This powder is then placed on a sheep-skin, upon which Baby is laid, and thus all his excretions are absorbed, the powder being changed every day or two. Lactation is continued as long as possible, sometimes to the third year, but the child is also allowed to eat other food, just as he fancies. Some women once visited the Doctor Mem-sahib on a winter evening and were astonished when she took them to peep at her baby, for had she not left the sleeping child alone, in the dark, and in a cold room with the window wide open? Their babies on the contrary sit on their mothers' laps or crawl about until the grown-ups go to bed, tasting all the supper, and enjoying the warmth, not to say stuffiness, of the big stove, as well as all the light and conversation. While still a tiny mite, Baby is slung in a cloth over the back of his small sister, who makes a little picture of premature motherliness, as she goes to her work or play with a bobbing baby on her back.

It is extraordinary how alike childhood is all the world over. These children have a game called the wolf and lamb, very similar to our fox and sheep, in which they will sing "The wolf is not there; to the horse gate we'll go." Then the wolf comes out, and the mother sheep with outstretched arms has to try to protect her little ones, who stand behind her in order of height, while the bad wolf seizes the last and smallest, one after the other until all have been stolen. Then there is a kind of hopscotch, which has come up from India, and an indigenous hide-and-seek called *Yib-ches-lo-lo*. And of course the boys have their games of fashioning idols on the

mountain side and imitating the lama's ritual, or pretending to be kings and wazirs, with wars and fighting. The little girls—true daughters of Eve—interlace iris leaves to imitate *perags*, and exercise their housewifely instincts by making little houses and kitchens of stones and earth, and arranging quite nice little models of the family stove on which the most delicious *drons* are cooked, for, "lets' pretend" is a more potent spell than ever in this land "the wrong way round."

But soon work begins to be mixed with their play. Little people early become expert with the bellows and can keep the fire going, while mother attends to the contents of the cooking pots, for to make bright flames is always fascinating. Quite small children can take out the sheep and goats, and even the cows, keeping them in sight on the damp turf near spring and stream, where there are all sorts of games to be played, stone throwing, bridge-building, dam-making to irrigate minute fields, and all the wide-world mud delights of children. In the autumn fuel must be collected for the cold, hard days of winter, and the boys and girls, slipping their old sheepskins on their backs to keep the baskets from wearing out their clothes, go off to the hills to follow up the tracks of donkeys, ponies, zos and yaks, picking up the manure and flinging it over their shoulders into their baskets, varying their work with laughter and fun, and many a game. Back for breakfast, then off again till midday, and then another basketful in the evening, till a goodly pile of dung is drying on the sunny roof. As the leaves fall, they too must be swept up with rough little brushes of straw tied together; basketfuls of these are taken home and used to roast the barley before it is milled. Still better are the long days of spring and early summer, when boys and girls go off to the neighbouring hills and valleys to collect *burtsa* and other roots. for fuel, or to mind the sheep and goats while they wander about in search of fodder. These long days in the mountains

are real picnics, for *zan* and cooking-pots and wooden cups are all taken, also a little bit of food ready prepared in the pocket to eat when away up the hillside, where many a tale is told, and many a song is sung, echoing across the valley from one rocky perch to another. So the happy days of childhood pass, and in this land of primitive needs it is indeed difficult to get the children together for school. In the winter they get up so late, for fuel is scarce, dung has to be collected, and wood is so expensive, and bed is the warmest place till between 9 and 10 a.m. Summer is still worse, especially for the girls, as they must be off to the hills with the sheep and goats, so cannot be spared, and when they reach their teens plans for marriage are laid.

But why learn arithmetic when nature provides such a convenient counting-board as the knuckles. With the thumb as pointer, each finger has three joints, a total of thirty on which calculations can be made. Why measure time in years, when a contract may be worded as poetically and conclusively as follows :—" the bond to last till the crows turn white, and the glaciers melt." Where payment is made in kind, wages need not be calculated; thus your fields can be worked by giving the labourer part of the products. Only the gods must not be forgotten, for the first few handfuls of corn plucked must be tied to the pillars of the best room, and dedicated to the god of the brotherhood to which any given family belongs. For each family is linked up in such a brotherhood, the members of which are called *pa-spun* (man-brethren). These are originally relations, though outsiders may be sworn-in at a special feast, and all worship at a common altar, presided over by their special deity. This custom is said to be a remnant of the ancient worship before Buddhism came to the country, the gods sometimes having Hindu names. The altar is originally built as a platform of mud and stone, and on it is placed a clay pot, round which a wall is built. Into the pot are placed small offerings, such as grain, coral, pearl,

pieces of silver and gold, and then a local *Skushog* or great lama comes to dedicate it. The mouth of the vessel is closed and the wall built up over it, then, on top of this is placed another clay vessel whose offerings are renewed annually. On the third day of the new year the lamas are called in, and fresh offerings of rice, wheat and barley are dedicated, while the altar is decked with flags, branches of the pencil cedar, arrows, and horns of wild sheep and goats. Members of the brotherhood have certain duties to perform in connection with the great events of life. After death only a *paspun* may touch the corpse, and in marriages it must be a *paspun* who carries all the bride's belongings and dowry to her new home. Thus the countryside is linked up together in the bonds of a brotherhood based on religion.

CHAPTER XIII

Professions & Industries

WE have now to watch our Ladaki friends as they earn their livelihood, for not all are owners of fields, and even those who are find that an extra vocation allows of a dish of meat, rice and other luxuries on special occasions. Let us begin with the professional gentlemen. The clergy will be treated with elsewhere, but in addition there are doctor, horologist, teacher and nun to consider, all of whom, though not real priests, are regarded as performing religious functions. There are quite a number of doctors, some of them doing useful work, although the treatment, by even the best of them, occasionally shows shocking results. Their method of training is much like that which obtained formerly in England, when he who aspired to medical knowledge became apprenticed to a practising physician, and thus by actual experience learnt his trade. The theoretical knowledge is found in four large volumes, belonging to the *Kahgyur* which are the one hundred and eight large books containing the wisdom and knowledge of Lamaism. The doctor or *amchi* dons no distinctive dress, but he can always be recognized, for slung over his back he carries his medicines tied in a long cloth. These he has carefully collected on the hills during the spring and summer months, his knowledge of herbs being doubtless considerable, and to his stock he adds by purchases in the bazar from down-country merchants. See him as he climbs up the rickety staircase right on to the roof to visit one of his patients who

lies huddled up in a corner, complaining of bad pains in his knees, one of the ills to which most Ladak is advanced in age seem to be heir. The bad knees are felt, the tongue looked at, and then the serious business of examining the pulses—in the plural—is undertaken. Although they are all found at the wrist where the Western physician looks for the single one, yet there are actually six pulses, three on each hand, so that not only may the pulse of the heart be examined, but also those of the stomach, lung, liver, kidney and spleen. This thorough examination finished, the doctor proceeds to treatment, which in this case is the cautery, a great stand-by of the *amchi*. This may do good if only it does not go septic; at any rate it is a strong counter-irritant. Some powder is then given, and the patient informed exactly how to take it, whether with hot, cold or lukewarm water. Food, too, has a most important bearing on the complaint, for, whilst the meat of a white sheep will do nothing but good, that of the black would aggravate the symptoms. As this patient has no fever, he may let himself go to sleep, but if a man has a temperature to let himself drift into such an unconscious state would certainly be fatal. Cupping, the raising of blisters, and venesection are other methods of curing all sorts of complaints.

Next to the Lama the *Onpo* or Horologist is perhaps the most important individual, for if you wish to plough your field, to call in the lamas for the reading of holy books, or desire to choose the best day on which to marry, in fact for the decision of all the important affairs of life, you must get him to settle the auspicious day. There is little to distinguish the *onpo* outwardly, but on official occasions he may dress like a lama, even to the wearing of a priestly cap, but his pigtail will distinguish him from the ecclesiastic. On his back he carries his bundle of books, and the Tibetan almanac. Puntzog, who is thirty years of age, visits the horologist, for he desires to attend the festival at Hemis, but he wants to leave Leh on the best day possible. Hemis occurs in the

fifth Buddhist month, and, referring to his books, the *onpo* finds that for him to travel in such a south-easterly direction on a Thursday in the fifth month is most auspicious. But consulting the star for that day he finds the fates are unkind, and that should Puntzog leave on Thursday, he will be robbed. What is to be done, for, in every other respect Thursday is so lucky? Further research into the horologist's library shows a way out of the dilemma. Let Puntzog go seven steps in the direction of Hemis the day before, returning then if he likes, and he can travel safely on Thursday. One day the *onpo* paid the Doctor Sahib a visit, and he, wishing to have horological proof of his married bliss and to be assured of its continuance, asked the *onpo* to read his nuptial horoscope. His age being forty-three years showed that he was born in the "water sheep" year, whilst his partner appeared in this incarnation in the "water snail" year. Now it is quite evident that water and water mix splendidly, so that divorce was out of the question. But he had had a narrow escape, for a year's difference would have been disastrous, as it would have involved the union of wood and water, and as the latter rots the former, married happiness would have been impossible. He then inquired whether his actual wedding day had been a good one, and a beam overspread the *onpo's* face when his books told him that both the day and the constellation pointed to the choice of a perfect day. Not only riches, but a quiver full of children would be our lot. The *onpo* also advised the Doctor to take a sea voyage this year, for he was born in the water year, and this is the wood year; a ship is made of wood and is meant to go in water, therefore such a journey would be most auspicious. As he was to travel to England this year he trusted the omens would not belie themselves.

Among professions a few words must be said about nuns. Most Buddhist families like to have one representative in the Church, but sometimes they have no boy or cannot spare one.

PIGTAIL AND PERAG.

A typical Ladaki man and woman taken in summer. The lady need not wear her cape in and about the house, and the sidepiece, or "tail of the serpent" is missing from her *perag*. The gentleman shews well the effect of the rubbing of his well-oiled pigtail on his natural-coloured homespun.

In this case a girl must do duty. She begins her monastic life early. Her hair is shorn, she dons the clerical red, which is, however, cut like the dress of a lay-woman, and wears a tight-fitting red or yellow hat, with the sides only turned up. She is now dignified with the title of Grandmother or *Abi Jomo*, just as a lama of any age is respectfully venerated as Grandfather or *Meme Lama*. Generally the nuns continue to live quietly in their homes, but sometimes they are segregated, as in Lamayuru, where there is quite a little nun village. They do not in Ladak perform any ritual, though in Central Tibet they are fetched from their convents to read the holy books in private houses just as the lamas are. They of course remain unmarried, and are generally very ignorant, spending their time in menial labour or working in the fields of the monastery.

The teachers in this Buddhist country are generally lamas, and their work is practically restricted to teaching those youths who will enter the Church or the sons of noblemen to read. It is quite unnecessary for their scholars to understand the written page. In this there is little virtue, but the actual reading of holy books is meritorious. If the lamas are called in to read *Chos* (religion), they each take one page and then read all together, so that ten lamas reading ten pages will get through a book of a hundred pages in one tenth of the time, which is all to the good. The only books possessed by Buddhists are religious ones, and when the unsophisticated villager sees a Westerner reading a novel or secular literature, he respects him for "reading religion," though a more travelled gentleman may suspect the reading of an *akbar* or newspaper. The Mohammedans too have schools for the children of their co-religionists, and their text-book is, of course, the Koran in the original, namely Arabic. Sitting in a sunny spot in a semi-circle can be seen about a dozen Mussulman boys, each with a book before him. The teacher, an ordinary layman, who knows a little more than his brothers,

acts as mentor. He probably has a shop on the other side of the road, and keeps his eye open for stray customers while listening to his pupils. He reads a phrase and all the boys say it after him. Ask taught or teacher to explain what has been read, and they will acknowledge complete ignorance, and this with absolutely no feeling of shame. In Mohammedanism and Buddhism it seems as if the letter does not kill, but gives life. If the teacher is tired, he allows his class to practise reading by themselves. Each boy reads in a loud voice what 'seemeth him good,' and a horrible noise results.

Next in importance, though not in status, come the musicians and minstrels. Although no function is complete without the band, yet those providing the music are low in caste and classed with carpenters, both generally of Mon descent. They possess two kinds of instruments only, the small kettle-drum, the parchment of which is tightly stretched over a wooden frame shaped like a large bowl and is beaten with two short sticks; these drums are termed *dummadums*, which describes the music made so accurately that nothing further need be said. The other instrument is the flageolet, made of wood about two feet long, decorated with silver, and having a small metal mouthpiece. The tone this produces is a beautifully mellow one, and the tunes consist of many demi-semi-tones. If necessary these gentlemen will play almost continuously from morning till night, only needing a little beer or butter-tea and barley-flour occasionally to keep them going. These are the professional musicians, but many an ordinary family can boast its bard, who recounts the wonderful deeds performed by the mythical King Kesar, or tells of an heroic act done by some ancient townsman. The story is told, but every now and again the teller breaks into song, accompanying himself on his home-made fiddle. This is much like its Western counterpart, only the wooden section is narrower, shorter and deeper, and this sound-box is covered above with parchment. Strings are made of sheeps'

gut, and the bow of horsehair. Let us listen to Tsiring Rolmar, as she recounts to her husband and her two boys, one of these stories. In the corner of their living-room is the stove, behind which sits the housefather on a slightly raised platform, before him his cup of tea which he sips the while. On the opposite side, also sitting cross-legged, is his lady, who while she spins her yarn, blows the fire with her goatskin bellows, and at her side her youngsters drink in the story. Like all good tales hers begins—"Once upon a time," and goes on to tell of King Sralkai, of his little son Ulastopgyes, the princess Laches, and their cruel step-mother, who in order to rid herself of her husband's children feigned illness, and asked him to go to a certain old woman physician who lived on a hill far away. While the King was on the road thither, the wicked queen, successfully disguised, took a short cut and arrived at the mountain first, then told the King that the only cure for his queen was a meal made of the hearts of his two children. Sadly he returned, and we follow the prince and princess through a long and tedious history of various unsuccessful attempts to murder them, until eventually Ulastopgyes is recognized as a prince and is crowned king of a great country. His thoughts return to his poor old father, and he goes to rescue him from the wicked queen, who turns out to be a witch and is slain, whilst, of course, the rest live happily ever afterwards. But do not imagine this story is told in so few words—an hour would not suffice for all the details, and many cups of tea are drunk before the fortunate family is eventually allowed to "live happily ever after." Of such stories there must be hundreds, and for every myth or fairy-tale which we have in the West, the Ladaki has his Tibetan version. In the same way it would not be difficult to find a Ladaki proverb similar to almost every English one. Besides the story-teller and his fiddled accompaniment, there is the amateur with musical propensities who can express his feelings on a flute, also home-made, just a bit of hollow stick

with the necessary holes and the mouth-piece. So one often hears a piping from the youths who stroll out in the fields on a summer evening, or finds a hidden talent being brought to light among one's servants round the camp fire in the leisure following the day's march and cooking.

But no description of Ladak could be complete which did not consider the merchants who meet here from the four points of the compass, especially during the months of September, October and early November. At this time the Leh bazar becomes full of all sorts and conditions of men—the fair Yarkandi jostling the slit-eyed Tibetan, the Kulu man or his neighbour from Lahoul doing business with the men from Baltistan, Kashmir and most provinces of Northern India. And what do all these folk bring? From the North comes the Yarkandi with carpets of garish colours, furs of snow-leopard, fox and wolf, stone martin and beaver, Khotan silks and thick felt mats. It has taken him a full month of most difficult travelling over vast mountain ranges to get here, in fact the road is marked out in some places by the bleaching skeletons of man and beast. Before he can sell his wares, he will have to travel another month to reach the Plains of India. Here he purchases cloth which he takes back to his home and sells there at a good price. Many of the Yarkandis combine religion and business, coming over the passes in the late summer of the year, and going *via* Bombay to Mecca, then, after the sacred pilgrimage has been accomplished, they return through India, still trading, to cross the passes the following autumn. In Leh, the Yarkandi has either to buy horses or sell them, for the Kashmir State makes its own transport arrangements between Leh and Srinagar, but from here to Yarkand no such facilities exist. It is amusing to watch them doing a horse deal, for though it is done in public, outsiders are none the wiser concerning the purchase price. Each man places a hand up the voluminous sleeve of the other. Says the buyer—"I will give you *Imeme*" simul-

taneously pressing the seller's arm with two fingers, but he, not wishing to sell at the suggested Rs200, presses the buyer's arm with five fingers saying, "*tso*" which signifies his willingness to sell at Rs250. Eventually they strike the bargain at Rs230, two pressures with the spoken word of *Imeme*, and three to *tso* having settled the deal. Then we also can watch the Tibetan who has brought salt, borax and Lhasa tea to barter with the Balti for his dried apricots and cooking-butter. The nomad from Changtang brings the long soft wool from his long-haired sheep, which the Kashmiri trader carries down to be transformed into *pashmina*, the basis of the far-famed delicate Cashmere shawls. The nomad gentleman does not seem at all chilled himself by the cold nip in the autumn air, for he often has a shoulder completely withdrawn from his long, wide sleeve, and the exposed lung area seems quite insensitive. The man from Kulu has carried kerosine up here, and perhaps also china cups, whilst the merchant from India supplies German cloth or rich stuffs for the Ladaki gala dresses, chemises and pantaloons, haberdashery of all kinds, Indian tea, spices, cigarettes, and the hundred and one things which are needed by the Ladaki housewife to keep her family up to the standard of civilization locally attained. In autumn, when trade is at its maximum, it is a good thing there is no vehicular traffic in the bazar, for the more bulky wares are deposited in large bundles about the main street, and it is only possible for the pedestrian to steer a zigzag course along the thoroughfare, further complicated by the waiting yaks, zo's, horses, asses and mules.

One would like to describe how the blacksmith makes a hole in the ground and, with goatskin bellows and charcoal, gets quite a good fire in which he works his metal and makes his pots, pans and attractive teapots; also to tell of the carpenter, sitting on the ground holding the plank with his two feet and one hand, while sawing with the other, and in

order to make this possible has the teeth of his saw turned the opposite way to the English saw ; or of the seamster making his Ladaki hats. But time and space will not permit ; suffice it to say, that, whenever possible, the Ladaki workman seems to do things " the wrong way round " as far as our point of view is concerned.

CHAPTER XIV

Occidental Treatment for Oriental Maladies

PEACE, after the Great War, having been finally ratified in 1919, every important town throughout India had its celebrations, and Leh, the Capital of Western Tibet, could not, of course, omit them. There was no doubt as to the thoroughness of our rejoicings, which lasted for four whole days, but their ending was of a disastrous nature. Fireworks had never before been seen in Leh, and a generous Commissioner supplied the town with its first *tamasha* of the kind. In the centre of the square court in front of the Wazir's house, a large bonfire was made, but for some reason or other the Kaiser's effigy was not enthroned thereon. Surrounding this at some distance, a large crowd of men, women and children were gathered. The two local policemen were in charge of the display, and produced loud "*O—le's*" of wonder as they let off rockets, squibs, catherine wheels, crackers and Roman candles. Towards the end, however, some of the policemen's assistants got too near to the bonfire, with the result that the remaining fireworks ignited, and went up in a blaze of light, causing burns to about half-a-dozen people. One of these gentlemen, thinking no doubt that such a unique display would entrance the celebrations at his next wedding, had quietly filled his trouser pockets and other handy places in his garments, with fireworks. But, alas, his display came off rather sooner than he had anticipated, for he too caught fire, and provided quite an interesting spectacle as he rushed off to the nearest stream in which to put himself out, the while belching forth rockets and

other magnificent lights from various parts of his person. But these had to be quenched as soon as he could possibly seat himself down in the brook, crushing in its covering of ice and snow to soak in the cool depths of its bed. Those injured adjourned to the Moravian Mission Hospital, where we concluded our celebrations by dressing their burns, but this gentleman, not wishing to disclose the fact of his unlawful annexations, went elsewhere to have his injuries treated. Weeks after, however, he came to us, still suffering from the effects; and we were able to cure him also. The initial item on our programme of peace celebrations was one entitled "Procession of Notables round the Town." The notables consisted of Tehsildar, Naib Tehsildar, Darogas, Naib Darogas, Policemen, Naib Policemen, Telegraph Master, Postmaster, Charas Officer and his staff of assistants, Aksakal and his clerks, and in fact anybody who could find a pony on which to ride. Among them figured also the Missionary "Padre" and Doctor, indeed these two considered themselves notable "Notables," for they were asked to head the procession, one on each side of the chief magistrate, and were preceded by our noble company of sepoys. If the common people of the town were not edified by this sight of their notables on horseback, their sense of the sublime must have been sadly lacking. So we feel we have every right to include ourselves among "other professional gentlemen" of the town, as representatives of Western Medicine. We cannot lay claim to being unique in this respect, for the Kashmir State has its Dispensary in the charge of a Sub-Assistant Surgeon.

So now let us visit the combined Moravian Mission Hospital and British Charitable Dispensary. Like all our houses in Leh, the Hospital buildings are made of mud-bricks. In the centre of the compound is the Hospital garden, which is enclosed by the wards and administrative buildings. Entering the out-patient room, we find a very cosmopolitan crowd awaiting attention. The greater number are, of course, Ladaki men

and women, both Buddhists and Mohammedan, the latter revealing the fact by wearing turban or red fez, and their names often indicating that they were formerly Buddhists, who had been converted to the faith of the prophet ; this is done by adding the word " Sheik " to their new Mohammedan names. Then there are Baltis, ill-clad looking creatures with their meagre black skull-caps from under which appear long, curly, but unkempt-looking, locks. How different from the two or three well-dressed, distinguished-looking Yarkandis, who sit next to them, stalwart men from Chinese Turkestan. Their faces are almost as white as that of the European, with shortly-cropped black hair and black beards, and they wear nice warm wadded garments cut somewhat like a frock-coat with very long sleeves, but of less sombre colours, sometimes a silky glossy cloth of black or even nice blue. To brighten this a large gay coloured embroidered square scarf is worn, folded triangularly with the apex downwards in the middle of the waist behind. On their heads are green or other coloured caps, lined with fur and turned up round the edge, or white pugarees. Occasionally these gentlemen bring their wives with them. Being Mohammedan they may not show their faces to strange men, and they therefore cover them with a voluminous head-dress, with network squares let in over their eyes through which they can look. Then there are some Kashmiris, men with beautifully regular features, strongly reminding one of pictures of good-looking Jews and of stories of the lost ten tribes of Israel. Other down-country races, too, may be represented, such as the Punjabi, or perhaps a Sikh, with the fringe of his black beard neatly plaited, and often the proud Pathan or Afridi appears. That wild ferocious-looking fellow with long, untidy, straggling hair is, of course, one of the upland nomads, whilst the well-dressed man who is sitting on one of our two stools is a merchant priest from the closed land of Tibet. Now shall we stand at the doctor's side, and listen with him to some of the complaints of these patients.

A very old and dirty-looking beggar-man enters, and calmly addresses the Doctor as follows, "Well, Little Brother, can you give me some medicine?" "Yes, certainly, Grandfather," replies the very professional Doctor, for in Ladak we are all related. Then comes a sedate, elderly lady, who tells us she is called "Deskyid," a name as pretty as its meaning, which is beautiful-happy. "And what is your trouble, A-che (Big Sister) Deskyid?" the Doctor inquires. Poor Deskyid has a very troublesome disease, for she feels as if the back of her leg had moved round to the front! The patient next to consult the Doctor is even in worse plight, for her arm has gone quite *hangdang*, which literally means mad. The Doctor knows of no medicine that is able to cure these troubles, but paints both offending members with Iodine, in the hope that its colour at any rate will help the leg itself to distinguish back from front, and bring the erring arm to its senses. Then comes a lama, who asks whether we can supply him with a little human flesh. We had never regarded ourselves as a shop for this commodity, and on inquiry are informed that should one wish to obtain the powers of witchcraft, or sprinkle any offering with a very potent potion, it is necessary to get a concoction consisting of various kinds of flesh, including human flesh, milk, blood and other ingredients. This should be drunk by the devotee, who will then receive mystic powers. This is, of course, a relic of the old cannibalism and human sacrifice which preceded the arrival of Buddhism, and is still reflected in a common oath constantly heard in the roads—*Amai Sha*, which means "by my mother's flesh." Our friend had to obtain these occult powers without our help! Priests also have their troubles. Said one to the Doctor, and he a Holy Incarnation, too, "Can you give me some medicinë which will turn my skin white like your own." One can only hope he will behave so well in this incarnation that he may be re-incarnated in a white race next, although it is whispered that such a degradation only happens on account

of former sins. Another patient—this time a Royal one be it noticed—asks for some medicine which will stop his beard from growing. Could such be produced much trouble might be saved for him as well as many others. The next comer informs us that he himself is not a patient, but that away at his home his little brother is suffering from headache, and is quite aggrieved that treatment without examination is refused. Now a Balti comes, who says he is perfectly well at present, but that he is quite certain one day he will have a pain in his digestive organs, and he would like to be prepared against that day. Another old gentleman has returned for more medicine, although only yesterday he had been provided for three days, and on being reproached for having disobeyed instructions, advances the perfectly reasonable argument that, if one dose of medicine is going to do him good, ten doses will multiply the good effect tenfold.

Having seen all our out-patients and attended to their treatment, we adjourn to the operating-room where a cataract is to be removed. To-day our patient is of noble rank, being the mother of the chief Rajah of Ladak. Some days previously the old King had asked us to operate on his maternal relative, and we actually fixed the date, but, alas! he found on consulting his horologist and books, that we had chosen a most inauspicious day and begged the Doctor to change it, which he did. There lies the old lady on the operating-table, her refined features and well-kept hands testifying to her good breeding. We scrub our hands so thoroughly that the onlookers, among whom is the King, no doubt feel this is part of a religious performance preceding the operation. Having arranged the sterile towels, we are just about to start, when the exalted son begins walking up and down the room rapidly, saying his *Om Mani pa dme hungs*, the while turning the beads of his rosary. This is hardly conducive to the stillness an English surgeon would desire when performing a cataract extraction. The obstructing lens is removed, how-

ever, and great is the joy when the old lady finds she can again see, but she can hardly be surprised, when the day was so auspicious, and her son's prayers had been so vigorously performed. She was then sent back to her ward, which had been converted into a fairly regal apartment by means of Tibetan rugs and cushions and other paraphernalia brought from her castle. Fourteen days later she was told she could now return to her home, but she told her royal Physician that she was so enjoying her holiday that she would like to stay in our Hospital for another fortnight. Her royal wish was regarded as a command, and we prolonged her holiday, but before she finally left, she honoured us by calling at our house with her retinue, and to testify their gratitude for restored sight she and her son presented us with gifts.

But now let us go to the wards. The word "ward" conjures up pictures of long rooms, with spick-and-span white painted walls, and floors so polished and smooth, that one feels skates would be the safest foot-gear ; tables with plate-glass tops and beautiful flowers, and rows of white, quilted beds. But in the frontier hospitals of India, wards are not quite of this nature. When a Ladaki goes to Hospital, he does not go alone, but likes to take as many of his family with him as he can, and our wards are made to accommodate them all. This has the further advantage that the family's cooking fire, which is often made on the floor in the centre of the "ward" helps to heat the room. The whole building is made of mud bricks, some floors are boarded, others are not. We enter the first ward. Here is a man on whom we operated to remove large tumours, depending from the lobes of his ears, which had formed because he would persist in wearing ear-rings. We warn him that if he does not restrain his vanity in future, he will get further growths, but he replies that it is a religious duty for him to wear the ornaments, and he had actually come to have his keloids removed in order to be able to wear ear ornaments again. In the next ward we find an

old lady who has had her cataract removed. She is lying on the floor by the side of a nice spring bedstead, on which she had been placed yesterday after her operation. In reply to our query why she did not stay quietly on her bed, she says she felt so giddy sleeping so high up in the world, and more safe on the floor. True, she cannot fall out of bed now. In Ward 3 is a Yarkandi whose leg we have had to amputate to save his life. He has come that difficult journey from Yarkand, over the Karakorum range of the Himalayas and the Dipsang plateau, and been overtaken by frost-bite. Very likely at the end of the hard day's march over the snow he was so exhausted that he fell asleep without troubling to take off his heavy boots, and the circulation had no chance to re-establish itself in the severe cold. In the next ward we find that a string has been stretched across from one wall to the other, over which strips of meat have been hung, and we are told that the family are drying their next winter's supply. One can just imagine the happy expression on the face of an English Surgeon, who on entering his ward found such activities being pursued. In the next ward we can see nothing, for it is filled with acrid smoke which so hurts our eyes that we beat a rapid retreat. Dinner is being cooked! But we must not linger longer with our in-patients, for we would like to take the reader with us on a medical tour.

When we visited Kyelang, it will be remembered that we made a detour to a place called Lingshed. Messengers came to beg us to go to this village in 1916, because it was so central, and they promised that blind folk from the whole surrounding district would gather there; the further inducement was held out that throughout the trip the question of supplies would be made easy for us. So one evening we found ourselves in our tents in Lingshed with about thirty blind folk sitting round. We examined their eyes, deciding that some were operable, others not. The latter were informed as kindly as possible that no operation on earth could

cure them of their blindness, but our solicitude seemed unnecessary, for they remained quite cheerful, merely saying "*Lanchaks*,"—that is "we are atoning for our sins in a former incarnation." No doubt those successfully operated upon are getting the reward for former good deeds, and for the successful operation it is quite unnecessary to thank the Surgeon when virtue is being rewarded. The next question is, where are we to operate? Under the open sky the sun is too grilling and brilliant, and the tent is too small. We have detected a verandah which would make a most suitable temporary operating-theatre, in fact it is practically the only available spot, but, on suggesting this, are informed that this is a temple verandah and belongs to a very great and holy man. "There you cannot operate" we are told emphatically, and reply that the reason adduced makes the place more desirable than ever, and we must operate there or nowhere. This point is gained, or partly so. We might operate on the men there, but not the women, for they must not enter such a holy place. Alas! the Doctor Sahib must have had a strange upbringing, for he informs these Lingshed men that in the peculiar country whence he comes, the dictum is "Ladies first," and only when these are done can the Lords of Creation be tackled. That settles this point, but not even yet are all our difficulties overcome, for a very old lama finds his way to the Doctor, who having examined him, finds the eyes quite operable. He is, however, begged not to give the old fellow his sight, for he is so poor that he has not sufficient food to sustain him while the wounds heal, nor a helper to care for him during his time in bed. The former objection is easily overcome for we begin to charge in kind for the medicines we dispense, and soon the old fellow finds himself quite well off in flour, rice, and dried apricots, and a nurse is also provided for him. Preliminary arrangements having been completed, we make our way one fine morning to our temporary operating-theatre in the verandah of the temple. An old bedstead which cannot boast a spring-mattress, having only a rough

network of rope, serves as operating-table. A small box does duty as instrument table, whilst an X travelling wash-stand must serve for the Surgeon's washing of hands and that, too, of his assistant. The first patient is brought in, a woman who prostrates herself before the door of the temple. One of the villagers has been impressed as an extra assistant, and is now instructed thoroughly to wash the lady's face with soap and water. She is then laid on the dirty bedstead, and her dirty clothes are covered first by a sheet of clean mackintosh, and then by towels which have been sterilized in Carbolic Acid, and her not overclean hair is likewise covered. Cocaine is then instilled into both eyes, the Surgeon and his assistant wash their hands, then kneeling at their very low operating-table proceed to extract the cataracts. This done, fingers are held up for the patient to count, and the onlookers reveal their interest and joy by ejaculations of "*wah!*," or "*tong dug*" —"she sees." Eyes are bandaged, and the next patient tackled. That day we did twenty-two cataract operations, and afterwards were inclined to boast about it till we met another Missionary Doctor,—Holland of Quetta,—who told us that he had done over ninety in one day. And the results? Of our twenty-two, eighteen received good sight, two were partially successful, whilst two were failures. Considering the dirty patients and dirtier surroundings, we felt the results quite justified the trip. We stayed a few days longer till it was safe to leave those on whom we had operated, and then began our return journey, thinking ruefully of how the deputation from Lingshed had promised to furnish us with supplies on the road, and had faithfully done so until the operations were over and there was little more to be got out of us. On the way home we were left to fend for ourselves, and our poor ponies had occasionally to go hungry. Ingratitude, and not gratitude, is one of the prominent characteristics of the Ladaki, for does not a good action bring its own reward, and the Doctor will have reaped much merit from his medical tour.

CHAPTER XV

National Pastimes & Sports

" But their style of playing polo was irregular and rash
They had mighty little science, but a mighty lot of dash :
And they played on mountain ponies, that were muscular and strong
Though their coats were quite unpolished, and their manes and tails were long."

" When the Geebung boys got going it was time to clear the road ;
And the game was so terrific that ere half the time was gone
A spectator's leg was broken—just from merely looking on."

A. B. PATERSON.

AS food without salt is savourless, so is work without play " says the Ladaki proverb, and, putting precept into practice, he flavours the toils of life with a variety of games which he begins early in life. The Leh youngster makes three little heaps of dust in the high street of the capital, places a stick in each, produces a home-made ball of rags, another larger stick for bat, and, like boys in the home-land, begins his game of cricket by a heated discussion as to who should have the privilege of first innings. If sticks are scarce, he takes a small one, about six inches long, points each end, then with a club he strikes one of the ends sharply ; the stick rises up in the air, and as it falls he hits it again as hard as he can, and lays down the club. Then his opponent picks up the small stick and from where it has fallen throws it at the club which he tries to hit. Visions of small boys playing an exactly similar game in England come to the mind. Football, too, has become thoroughly acclimatized, and is played by old and young. The former, having raised a proper ball, tuck the

bottoms of their dressing-gown coats into their ample belts, and play with bare or merely stockinged feet, whilst their younger brothers enjoy their game just as thoroughly when they play it with a rag ball. The game of marbles too has found its way here, but must adapt itself to the poverty of the country. Stones as round as can be found are used, or if walnuts abound they do service for a similar game. A hole is dug in the ground or in the raised base of a *chorten*, and the aim is to throw as many of these walnuts into it as possible. Nor are the Ladaki lasses without their games. A finger or stick traces in the sand and dust the lines necessary for hopscotch just as efficiently as the chalk-line on a London pavement, and little Ladaki legs, although they are shod with clumsy native footgear, do their hopping just as nimbly as those of their English sisters.

The Ladaki also believes in the dictum, "what thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might," at least as far as games are concerned, and with a little training he would compete on equal terms with our own countrymen. Those boys sent down-country to the Rev. C. E. Tyndale Biscoe's splendid school rapidly pick up hockey, tennis, badminton, swimming and rowing, in fact, excel in all sports. But let us now watch them at their own national games, the favourite being polo. Ladak may not be the home of polo, but it certainly found its way here at an early date. Even if it arose in Persia, it very soon migrated to Gilgit, and the Dards, no doubt, brought it with them to Ladak, and now it is not even a hyphenated Ladaki game, for most good-sized villages have their own polo ground. In Leh, the capital, the game was formerly played in the high street, but this evidently became so dangerous for the shopkeepers that now we have a proper polo ground. This consists of a level space about two hundred yards long, which cannot boast of a blade of grass, but is covered by a layer of dust so thick that before play begins, it has to be laid with water. On one side it is bounded

by the high wall of the Wazir's or State Commissioner's garden, on the other by a low wall about one foot high built of large stones, piled one on top of the other without mortar or cement or even mud. Halfway along this, a platform of mud and stones has been erected, from the top of which "the notables" watch the game, a *Shamiana* or awning being erected on high days. Two large stones at either end are sufficient as goal-posts. On the ground itself to one side sits the band of four; two flageolets and two kettle-drums. These at one moment are announcing another goal obtained and at another are defending themselves from the polo sticks, for the game is raging right in their midst. But now let us turn our attention to the players and their mounts. Here it is not the rich man's game, a stud of horses is quite unnecessary. Even a poor farmer possesses one pony, and if he makes himself a stick, he, too, can join in. The stick is quite easily manufactured, its shape being that of an English hockey stick, but with a longer handle. By making this and the striking end of two pieces, and letting the former into the latter, a rude splice is obtained. Rules for play there would seem to be none. If your opponent gets in your way, ride him down. If only six players have come, three a side will do, if ten players turn up, two fives make an equally good game. Although play can last for as long as you like, the same poor miserable pony is used the whole time, and will hardly enjoy it as much as the English one is said to do.

Now the play begins. The ball has been thrown into the centre of the course and four horsemen are trying to get it. A pig-tailed Ladaki has it, and is riding as hard as he can for his opponents' goal. His hitting is beautifully clean, and the playing of the band announces a goal for his side. His enemies' posts now become his own, which he has to defend. Now watch him carefully, for he will show you a pretty piece of play. He has dismounted, picked up the ball, and, remounting, takes both it and his stick in his right hand, then gallops

down the field as hard as he can. Reaching the half-way approximately, he throws up the ball, and, with the stick, which is still in the same hand, he hits the ball full and straight into the enemies' goal. To do this at such a pace needs good horsemanship and a wonderfully steady eye and aim. Ends are changed again and the ball is in play. There goes a little fellow from Chushot on his very disreputable pony with saddle tied on none too firmly. The ball is rather beyond his ordinary reach, but what matter, for he has only to lean right out of his saddle, so that, if desired, he could almost touch the ground ; by this means he reaches the ball. There he goes again, but alas, this time his saddle will not stand the strain, swings round with him, and leaves him lying somewhere beneath his pony. Listen to the roars of laughter which greet his performance. Now a Mohammedan from Leh has the ball. A good player that, but his shot has not been accurate, and instead of landing in between the goal-posts, it has gone straight into the crowd of spectators. " Was there a man dismayed ? " Not one, for if anybody has been hurt, he is nursing his pain in secret. Thus the game goes on; it may be for an hour or even more. Scoring is high, for there is not much ground between the opposing goal-posts.

During the summer months the British Joint Commissioner sometimes likes to play. To provide him with regular sport, a certain number of men from the village of Chushot are detailed to appear twice weekly and this is regarded as their share of forced labour. If they do not play well, a threat that no improvement in their style will spell the ordinary *begar* (forced labour) with its carrying of loads, soon mends matters. One year we were able to play a game of England versus Ladak. Two " Varsity " men were shooting up here, and they, with the Commissioner and the Doctor, represented Britain. Ladak certainly put one of its strongest teams on the field. Difficulties soon arose for the visitors, for they were not able tothrow the ball up and hit it while riding even at a

slow trot. One alternative only remained: No. 1 had to drop the ball at the mid-line, whilst No. 2 who was riding immediately behind was expected to hit it. During the first half the European combination did wonders, and at half time were leading by four goals, but this put the home team on its mettle, and they gradually caught up. Time, however, was in favour of the visitors, who won their game by one goal. Will such a match ever be played again?

Next let us go to the bazar and watch the horse-racing. This peculiar species of horse-racing is quite in keeping with this quaint country. We take up our positions on the verandah of the post office. At the further end of the bazar about thirty ponies and their jockeys are gathered. First along the course comes a rider decked out in the most wonderful garments. His dress is a beautifully embroidered Chinese mandarin's robe and the insignia of his office is a tigerskin tunic. On his head he wears a large round hat covered with gilt tinsel, the crown rising to a dome, surmounted by a knob to which streamers of gilt tinsel passing from the brim are attached. This is quite a personage, who assumes the title of *glabdag*, which means one to whom the gods are subject. The office boasts a long lineage and is traceable to pre-Buddhist times. Its representative is always chosen from one of three families, and his duty is to serve the King personally, one especial task being to change the pencil cedar on His Majesty's altar on New Year's day. When he rides ahead of all the jockeys, he is acting as his King's Viceroy. Having led the way, the race can begin, but a starter is quite unnecessary. Each man starts off just when he likes and simply tears down the bazar as hard as his pony will carry him; though they often elect to start in a bunch, there seems to be no purposeful relationship between them, and odd ones left far behind carry on with equal zest. Needless to say bookies are unnecessary. Sometimes a wag will add to the delight of the spectators by performing gymnastic feats as he rides, possibly having dressed

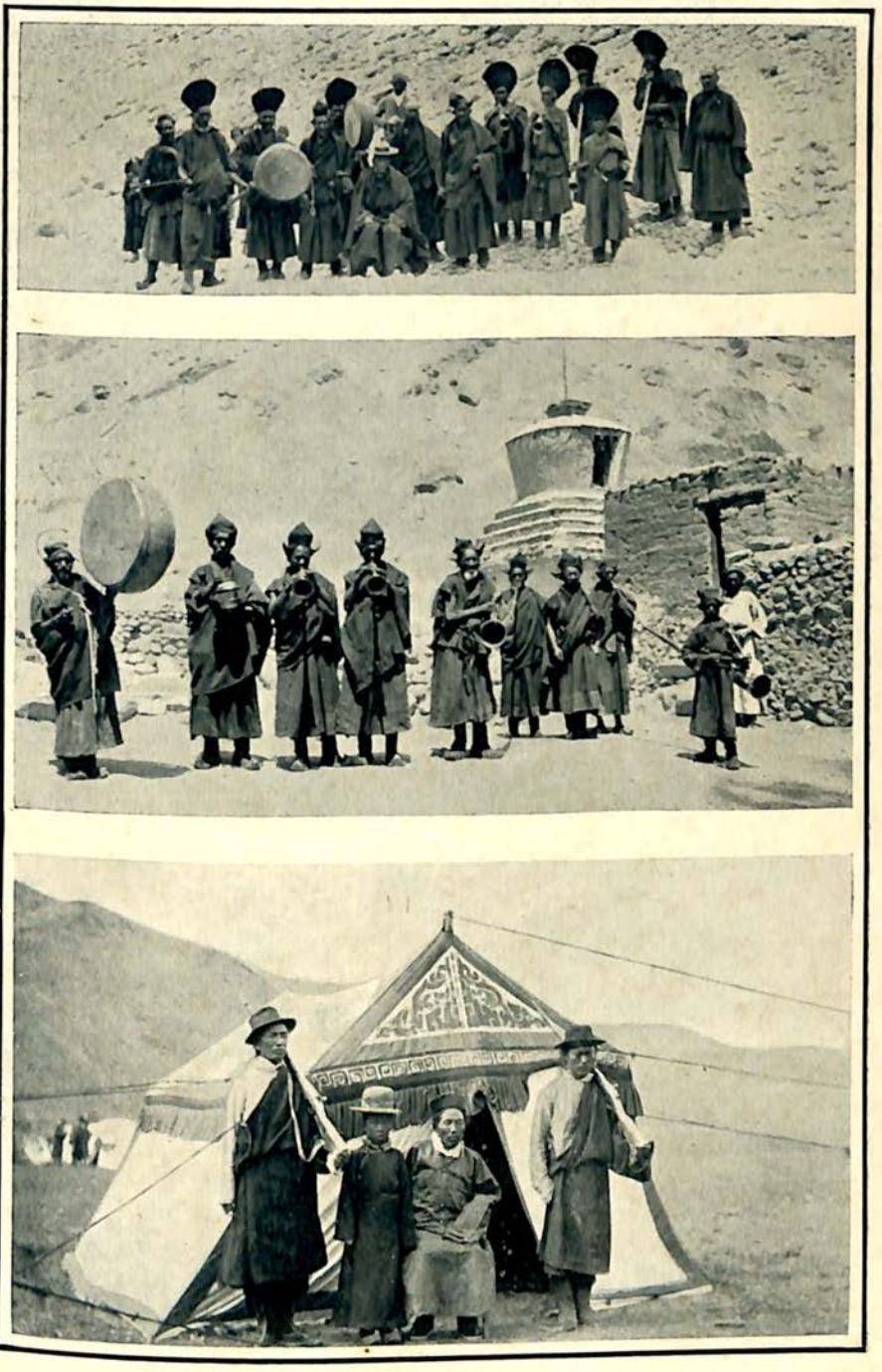
up to enhance the exhibition, which is loudly applauded. When all have ridden the course, they canter back and repeat from the beginning. This goes on for two or three days, and Ladakis find it interesting to the end. Sometimes the amusement becomes intense, when, for instance, a horse has shed his rider, because the saddle had not been fixed on firmly, and the racer finishes his course with empty back.

Games on horseback are most desirable at this altitude, where human lungs find scarcely enough oxygen for strenuous exertion, and Ladak is adding a Yarkandi equestrian game to its repertoire. No sides are picked, but there is a goal. A dead sheep is thrown on to the ground. At one time no doubt they played with a live animal, for Yarkandis do not think much about "Prevention of Cruelty to Animals" Societies. A man catches up the sheep as best he can and then rides with it for the goal. If he accomplishes this, he may look forward to many a big supper of mutton, but all the other horsemen try to make this impossible. The falls, pullings, and pushings this piece of mutton gets, should go far to make it tender, whatever its age may be.

Another sport which the Ladakis thoroughly enjoy is arrow shooting. This always takes place in the spring, just before the fields are sown, the Mohammedans and the Buddhists having each their own archery meeting. A garden or an enclosure with trees round an open space is chosen, at one end of which a heap of earth is piled up about four feet high. Into the centre of this is stuck a bull's-eye, about the size of a china plate and made of white clay. At the opposite end, about twenty yards from the target, are several tents, nicely decorated, in which sit those members of their respective community, who, by subscribing towards the shoot, have bought themselves the right to be present and take part. Others may join in, but are there on sufferance, and if they have not paid, even superb shooting will not obtain th

applause of either the band or the onlookers. Is it necessary to say that the inevitable band is there also? The shooting begins. An archer takes up his position, draws his bow, his friends encouraging him by calling: "*Shok, shok, shok, shok, shok, shok, shok,*" and continuing to do so until the shaft has flown. Should it break the clay, the band strikes up and is rewarded with a backsheesh, whilst the archer has a salutation scarf thrown round his neck. If an enemy should be shooting, he can be discouraged by shouting:—"*Kyor, kyor, kyor,*" which means "miss." All having loosed their arrows, of which each man shoots three, they retire for refreshments and conversation, whilst the arrows are fetched back. This competition also lasts three days, during which Leh is not allowed to forget it, for the continuous beating of the kettle-drums is constantly inviting more spectators to the show.

In concluding this chapter we would like to refer to some of the sport which the white man enjoys in this country. A certain number of shooting licences are given every year, namely twenty for the first half of the year and twenty for the second. These are generally used by Army officers, men of the finest stamp. It is only the "stern strong souls, who love the wild," who would face the biting winds which howl across these upland plains, who would put up with the loneliness, and often the bad cooking and limited supplies, which shooting there entails, and who would follow their quarry even to 17,000 feet, though already lungs are working at bursting point. To have to shoot immediately after such a climb, when one is still breathing hard, the heart working at about one hundred and twenty to the minute, and the hands shaking from exertion, is no easy matter. And yet it is worth it all. Is there anything on God's earth more thrilling than a few days up in His hills with a good rifle in one's hands and a splendid animal to be stalked? It seems such a pity that the expense makes this almost prohibitive for our younger officers, for surely such a holiday must make them fitter for



A Skushog and his Monastic Band

greeting the British Joint Commissioner on his tour. The Abbot is seated on a "wooden throne."

The Big Drum.

A similar band, shewing especially the type of drum used with its hooked beater, like a large mark of interrogation.

The Chief Tibetan Representative and his Son

who have come to confer with the British and State (Wazir) Joint Commissioners of Ladak about a boundary dispute.

the service than a continuous whirl of social functions in some Indian hill-station. One thinks wistfully of two "subs." who had saved up for such a holiday, one of them being the son of a man who had shot up here years ago, when he himself was in the Indian Army. But, alas, having reached Leh, they found they had only sufficient money to get back to their station, and had to give up the idea of shooting. Of wild sheep we have several kinds, most of them having splendid horns. It is said that these are so heavy that eventually their owners die of starvation, as they get too feeble to carry them and go in search of food.

To begin with, we have the Sharpu, which live on the lower hills and during the winter come right down into the fields. Out shooting one day, my shikari, a Ladaki hunter, and I spotted five of these animals on a hill opposite to us, and soon after noticed a couple of wolves stalking them. I got within five yards of the latter, as they lay waiting behind a rock. By the time I had jumped off my pony and had loaded my gun, they had got quite out of range, although they seemed to be slinking away quite slowly. We then watched the Sharpu, and to our surprise they came clean across the valley to the very spot where the wolves had been waiting for them, and passed within ten yards of us, even stopping to look at us. Needless to say they were does, and ladies one does not shoot. Large numbers of these must be killed by other predatory animals. Another time we found a Sharpu with horns of thirty inches, which had only just been brought down by a snow-leopard. At last I hoped to get one of the latter, which are fairly plentiful, though as yet I had never met one. But, alas, he got wind, and evaded me. The Ladakis hate these snow-leopards for they do much harm to their flocks. In order to catch them, they dig deep holes in the ground and build overhanging walls round. They then put down the sheep, whose bleating attracts the leopard. Having jumped in, he cannot negotiate the overhanging wall and meets an

ignoble death from stoning. The Ladakis assert that once down he is so scared that he does not attempt to kill the sheep, but this may be no truer than the statement that they hate them so much that they skin them alive. The people also make a very useful wolf-trap. One end of a large rock is balanced on a stick, to which they tie a piece of meat. A pull on this brings the stone down on the animal's head. On the higher hills the burrhel can be found grazing sometimes in herds of fifty to a hundred. These seem to have as many lives as a cat, for on two occasions I have hit them, brought them rolling down the hill, but on approaching to gloat over my kill, they have calmly got up and walked off. After this, I learnt not to unload until my foot rested on the dead body of my victim. Much higher up one finds the Ovis Ammon, a magnificent animal, whose horns at the base measure about eighteen inches in girth, and whose length is about fifty inches when full-grown. The Ibex, a kind of goat, prefers the rockier regions and, although the Ladaki Ibex is not as fine as that from Baltistan, yet even he can boast of horns some forty inches long. Right on the uplands towards Tibet, one can also get antelope, with beautifully slender, graceful horns, which at their ends curl forwards, not backwards. At one time it was possible to shoot the wild yak, but, even were he not almost extinct now, it would not be permissible to shoot him in the state of a Hindu Maharajah. It is surprising how these various animals keep to their own grazing grounds, and the native hunter, who is the gillie of Ladak, knows exactly on which slopes the various animals may be found. These gillies are remarkable for the way in which they can tell you the length of a horn to an inch or two, even at two hundred to three hundred yards. This is an essential qualification, for one is not allowed to shoot an animal unless his horns have reached a certain length. During the winter small game abounds almost everywhere. On the rocks pigeons are plentiful, and twice I have killed thirteen pigeons—a lucky number this time—

with my two barrels. On the sandy hill-sides one hears the clucking of partridges, and the creeks of the Indus abound with ducks. Among the snows are the snow cocks, and in the desert the hares. One day I had just raised my gun to shoot one of these, when, before I could pull the trigger, an eagle swooped down, caught him in his talons and soared away. It was a wonderful sight to watch him fly majestically with his prey right across the valley to his eyrie high up the mountain on the other side. His impudence had so nonplussed me that I had not pulled the trigger.

Thus the varied interest of the wild life in the mountains is never exhausted, and the remembrance of these happy days spent so close up to nature will always recall an experience which must closely approach "the top of the fulness of life."

CHAPTER XVI

Merit & its Acquisition

SODNAM or *Gewa*, both of which mean merit, are perhaps the two religious expressions most commonly used by the people of Ladak. It has been said that "the acquisition of merit is the controlling motive for most of the religious acts of the average Buddhist." This is perfectly true of Lamaism. How one gets to dislike the word merit, which is so absolutely the expression of utter and complete selfishness. The Ladaki simply does not believe in disinterested, unselfish action. True compassion is practically unknown. The cup of cold water is not given to quench the brother's thirst but to gain a reward. But whence does the Buddhist of Little Tibet get his idea of merit? Can it be from the Buddha, whose life was one of the most beautiful ever lived? This seems unlikely; in fact we are informed that he actually taught the utter uselessness of any action performed for the sake of obtaining merit, which thereby only defeats its own ends. Consciously he did not preach this appalling doctrine, and yet is it not an outcome of his teachings? This is not a treatise on Buddhist philosophy, and yet it is necessary to have a general idea of Gautama's teaching to be able to understand some part of the Ladaki's religious belief. To begin with it must be stated that it is very difficult to know what the Buddha really did teach, for the Pali writings are none too authentic, but there is no doubt that he connected all sorrow and trouble, sickness and death, with material existence, which he regarded as an illusion, and longed, not only for himself, but for all his

1. MASKED DANCING

In the monastery adjoining the castle of Leh at the winter festival of the New Year.

2. A CHORTEN-CROWNED GATEWAY.

These usually mark the entrance and exit of a village.

3. A SACRED BANNER.

The large banner of the tutelary god of Hemis *dGonpa* (monastery), only displayed at the annual festival once in twelve years.

4. A HEMIS STREET

Just before the festival, shewing the tents put up for the traders.

brothers and sisters, the bliss of deliverance which comes through the atrophy of personality. His views are well summed up in the four noble truths which he is said to have taught.

(1) Life is suffering.
(2) Life is the result of desire.
(3) Cessation of desire ends the life of suffering.
(4) Cessation of desire is attained by following the eightfold path.

What is the eightfold path? It consists of right belief; right aspirations; right speech; right actions; right livelihood; right effort; right mindfulness, and right contemplation. By what means can the Buddhist walk along these paths? By carrying out the Buddha's five commandments :—

(1) Do not kill.
(2) Do not steal.
(3) Do not commit adultery.
(4) Do not speak untruth.
(5) Do not taste intoxicating drinks.

This in a nutshell was Buddha's teaching, and, by the keeping of this law, he promised mankind that they would attain Nirvana, which is a state of unconscious bliss, when a personal existence is over and done with, and the liberated soul is at one and in harmony with the all-pervading. To attain this state, which the Ladaki calls "*Stongpa nid*," meaning "empty spirit," the soul has to work its way by re-incarnation through various existences of which there are six, until the balance of good actions over bad is so immense that the soul finds emancipation. Therefore every Buddhist takes such infinite pains to increase the credit side with good actions in order to obtain merit. Although all adherents of this religion do not admit it, yet most authorities agree that Gautama taught that no outside aid availed. Each man must work out his own salvation with fear and trembling.

The Southern school of Buddhism, called Hinayana (the small vehicle, for only the few can expect to reach Nirvana), still believes this, but the time came when a split occurred, and as a result Northern Buddhism or Mahayana Buddhism arose. "The Buddhist cannot rid himself of the feeling that if there are consequences of deeds to be borne, there must be someone to bear them." For ordinary men and women the gospel of Buddha was only a message of despair, for the bands which bound them to the Wheel of Existence were far too tight for them to loosen. This need of the human heart for a Saviour resulted in the Mahayana doctrine, so-called because it means the greater vehicle or means by which every Buddhist may hope one day to attain the bliss of Nirvana. First Buddha himself was regarded as this Saviour, and later others were ranked with him to help struggling humanity towards the final goal. The Buddha had the perfect right to enter a well-earned Nirvana, but compassion for men and women, beasts and demons, made him renounce this until he had aided all things living to enter this same bliss with him. Thus arose the beautiful story of Avolakita, the all-merciful one, the all-pitying one, to which we shall refer later and of whom the Dalai Lama is the living representative. Unfortunately this new doctrine also opened the door to all sorts of national gods and demons which Buddhism encountered in its spread, for now, at about the end of the first century, Buddhism became a thoroughly missionary religion, carrying this good news of possible redemption far and wide. It reached Tibet about the middle of the 7th century, where it found the old *Bon Chos*, which was a Shamanistic devil-dancing religion. The followers of the new faith having subdued those of the old, then incorporated much of the old religion in their own, thus producing Lamaism. This consists therefore of a substratum of real Buddhist philosophy understood by the few, and a large proportion of demonology which appeals to the unlearned masses.

Let us now consider some of the ceremonial of the religion of these cheery folk, and to do this we cannot do better than take an evening stroll to Changspa, which is a suburb of Leh and was formerly a place of pilgrimage. Our path leads us between fields of wheat and barley, now ripe for the harvest. Here our way is blocked because some *Zemindar* (farmer) is directing the flow of the water into his crops. Further on we reach a larger stream over which we cross by means of stepping stones.

We meet an old grey-head emerging from the village, who evidently feels that he has reached the age when he should be thinking of his next incarnation, for he is not only vigorously turning his prayer-wheel, but mumbling away at his *O ma ni pa dme hum's*. We stop to speak to him, for in this part of the world there is great friendliness. Our conversation by no means hinders his devotions, for he can still twirl his prayer-wheel, which with every turn is repeating hundreds of prayers for him, and in between his answers to us there are plenty of opportunities for saying his *O ma ni pa dme hum's*.

Being new to the country we perhaps try to ask him the meaning of his prayer, but generally he will reply that he has not the faintest idea, and most certainly will not give the translation one so often hears. "Oh thou jewel in the Lotus bud." If one regard the Jewel as the Divinity, and the lotus the body in which it resides, one surely approaches the teaching of the Buddha fairly closely. I have met only one or two Buddhist Ladakis willing to enlighten me in respect to this mantra, who said that the wheel of life, consists of six existences, and this mantra with its six syllables closes the door of all these, thus providing an easy vehicle to "STONGPA NID." There are other mantra, but this beyond comparison is the favourite one, as it is that of Avolakita, the Merciful Lord, and it ensures an entrance into the Kingdom of Amitabha, the Sphere of Endless Light. The wheel must be turned in the direction in which the sun travels, that is of

the hands of the clock, and not once or twice, but hundreds of times. To make this as easy as possible a weight on a short chain is attached, whose momentum makes it only necessary for the slightest movement of the hand to keep the wheel in almost perpetual motion. The number of *Om ma ni pa dme hum's* said need not to be counted, and yet it is good to know how much merit has been accumulated. Our old friend therefore carries in his other hand a rosary, which consists of one hundred and eight beads, usually red. This figure is a sacred one, being a multiple of twelve which is the Buddhist unit and not the ten which we use. To mark the beginning of this rosary three turquoises are strung together, doubtless representing "dGonmchog Sum," the Trinity of Lamaistic Buddhism.

But the rosary is useful in other ways also, for if only the beads to the right of the short chain are regarded as units, and those to the left as twelves, quite a useful counter on which to do one's temporal arithmetic is provided. Leaving our elderly friend, we go past a short *mani* or prayer-wall, and then another round one. These are about the height of a man, and may be of any length. Just outside Leh there are two with only a short space between, which cover about half a mile. The tops of these slope slightly upwards towards the middle, and are covered by innumerable flat stones on which pious monks have engraved still more innumerable *Om ma-ni's*. To turn these prayers to good account, it is essential to pass the wall to one's right; by walking thus along the Leh *Mani Ringmo*, which means the long Ma-ni wall, a good hundred thousand prayers are said, and your stage pony, being usually of the Buddhist persuasion, will see to it that you do your religious duty in this respect by taking you along the left side. Whenever the road reaches a prayer-wall, it divides to enclose it, so that the traveller's prayers can avail in whichever direction his journey lies. In many of the larger prayer-walls there is a recess at one side containing a large tablet on which

the occasion of the building of the wall is engraved. We pass on to a little streamlet in the village, and find that over it a little mud hut, about the size of a large dog kennel, has been erected, which houses another prayer-wheel. On the axle of this, below the receptacle for prayers, are paddles on which the running water impinges and thus keeps the wheel in perpetual rotation. The stream is often small, so that a light wheel is desirable, and what could be a better shell for enclosing the prayer paper than a Standard Oil kerosene tin, or a Mellin's Food tin, both of which are actually used.

The first house of the village belongs to the Kalon or former prime minister of Ladak, and in keeping with his exalted position, it is an imposing structure. On an outside wall we notice the skull of a goat, framed in small sticks tied together by twine, which is the *Storma* obtained at the New Year's festival, and keeps those in the house insured against sickness. The corners of the house have been painted a red colour, which effectually bars the entry of evil spirits. The Kalon does not seem to invite the good spirits to reside in his house, but others do. They only have to paint all over their walls white sickle-shaped smudges, and their invitations to these *lhas* will be accepted with alacrity. In the Kalon's court-yard is a high pole, to which is attached a strip of thin muslin about twelve inches broad and running the length of the flagstaff, which is surmounted by the black bushy tail of the holy yak. On the flag are printed a great number of prayers, with crude drawings of Tiger, Lion, Garuda and Dragon, all being mystical signs ensuring safety against enemies, earthly and celestial, increasing the number of children and wealth, in short achieving the entire health and happiness of the household. To set the necessary forces in action it only remains for the wind to flutter the flag on his roof. He also has a prayer-wheel which is so light that even the wind impinging on its vane will turn it.

We pass along the rough village lanes and everywhere

notice prayer-flags and *chortens*. Here there is a huge stone set up on end, on which has been engraven one large " Om ma-ni," and we might delay a few moments to examine it, especially the first and last syllables. The first one " OVA " consists of three signs, representing again the Trinity of Lamaism. Its chief letter is the capital " A " which stands for god. It should be written in white, as this is the colour of the gods. The whole is surmounted by a circle. Does the yellow cap lama desire to make his mind a perfect blank, he places this mystical symbol before his mind's eye, meditates first on the " A," then on the " V " which surmounts this, and finally it travels round and round the mystic circle losing itself in *Stongpa nid*, the idea being that by these means the activity of the brain can be stilled and the spirit become at one with the Infinite. The last syllable in the Mantra, *Hung*, is supposed to stand for the Demon world, and therefore it is not surprising that the red sect lamas, who represent most closely the old *Bon chos* with its demonology, should use this in a similar manner for their meditation. The colour of this symbol is blue. This mark sometimes ends as *hung* and sometimes as *hum*, and there seems to be a real difference, for a Buddhist friend has assured me that, whilst *hung* is connected with evil influences, *hum* produces only the good.

We raise our eyes and see an enormous *chorten*, the largest in Ladak, another mystical edifice allowing several explanations. These *chortens* are of eight different shapes, but of the most common form there are many sizes, ranging from small pocket editions, vulgarly called " potted lamas " for they are said to be made with the ashes of deceased monks, to structures larger than houses. From below upwards there is first a large square base, which is called the throne, on whole sides are painted figures of animals or holy eyes from which the throne derives its name, such as a Peacock or a Lion Throne. From this there rise five square steps, the lowest of which represents the holy carpet, for each lama sits

on a holy carpet. Above this, two steps represent legs and two more arms. Then comes a large pudding-shaped arrangement to represent the head. The body seems to have been omitted. From this there rises a high cone made of red tiles and divided into thirteen rings; these are said to represent the thirteen ages (*Skalpas*, each of 100,000 years) of the Buddhist, of which the Ladakis say we are now living in the last; this would make the present Dalai lama the last of this era. After this they begin again from the beginning.

Others have a different interpretation for the *Chortens*. From the axis of the earth there towers up Mount Meru, which supports the heavens. This is said to have twenty-five steps, which halved gives approximately enough thirteen, and the thirteen consecutive rings of the *chorten* cone represent those steps belonging to the earth. Surmounting this cone there is a large gilt ornament made of tin or some such metal which denotes the *Zarazak*, or the Umbrella of Office. Above this comes a globe for the sun, a crescent for the moon and a smaller globe for the stars, from which there rises up into "nothingness" a fine piece of wire. Yet a totally different explanation is given according to which, reading from below upwards, the *chorten* represents the five elements, earth, water, fire, air, and ether. Round the great *chorten* at Changspa, there runs a passage, which is bounded on the outside by a wall consisting of one hundred and eight smaller *chortens*, again the mystic figure. Within this outer wall there stands a very old sacred tree and a small *chorten*, containing in a hollow recess the very small *chortens* made of the ashes of lamas and other men, also a few leaves from the holy book and some salutation scarves. Before entering into the passage, we notice a square building, in the upper part of which is a recess containing three *chortens*, which should be coloured respectively red, white and blue, and behind them drawings of various gods and goddesses. A little further on and to the right is a large stone with an image of *Byamspa*

(Maitreya), the Buddha of the coming age who is the god of love for whom the Buddhist is now waiting. According to the esoteric teaching of Buddhism, there are seven root races of mankind, of which the present one, the Aryan, is the fifth. To each one of these a Buddha has come in human form so that man shall be able to comprehend the unknowable. Each of these emanations is a Logos of the supreme Buddha. Maitreya will be the Buddha of the sixth root race, and after him will come he of the seventh, whose name is still obscure, for the need of the seventh race which he will have specially to meet is also unknown. Thus we get the septenary system, belief in which is found to be so universal. To agree with this figure the most important mantra should really read *A-um-ma-ni-pa-dme-hum*. As one wanders round this little village of Changspa, one cannot help remembering Shakespeare's words,

> "Tongues in trees,
> Books in running brooks
> Sermons in stones
> And good in everything."

and wishing that the voices in this lamaistic land were living and spiritual rather than these mechanical and artificial forms of prayer, for to the ordinary man it is always a matter of *chos choches*, that is "doing religion," engaging in a mechanical, outward and superstitious form which has no relation to the man's spiritual life or to his moral conduct.

CHAPTER XVII

Rites & Ceremonies

HAVING considered general every-day methods of obtaining merit, let us turn our attention to the more specific and seasonal means, doing so in the order in which they occur annually. This makes it necessary to say a few words about the Buddhist Calendar, which seems to have been derived from the Chinese, and consists of sixty-year cycles, which are subdivided into five periods of twelve years each. The longer periods are named after the Buddhist elements of wood, fire, earth, iron and water, whilst the single years are called after various animals, such as mouse, ox, tiger or hare. The Ladaki does not therefore reckon his years in decades, but in dozens, so that when asked his age, he may inform you that, having been born in the sheep year of the water period, he must be three dozen and six year's old. Their year consists of three hundred and sixty days divided into lunar months, which the word for month, *zlaba*, pronounced *dawa*, implies. As this does not quite fit with the course of the sun, the Ladaki feels that he must try to humour him and his aberrations, by dropping days here and adding months there. He certainly feels that the sun needs his aid at times, for when an eclipse occurs, he shouts at the top of his voice to scare off "the dragon from completely swallowing the sun." Their week, like ours, consists of seven days, which are devoted to deities similar to our own, such as Sunday and Monday to Sun and Moon. They have noticed that Mercury looks like a red eye, so Tuesday is called the day of the red eye. Wednesday is the day of

Venus, whilst Thursday, the day of the dagger, must belong to the god of War. Jupiter and Saturn, even in Ladak, claim Friday and Saturday. The tenth day being the birthday of Padma Sambhava, their patron saint, who conquered all their demons, is regarded as holy.

The date of the new year varies, indeed in their topsy-turvy country they have two New Year days, one being the Ladaki, the other the Tibetan, both of which are celebrated, although for practical purposes the latter is used. The genesis of the Ladaki New Year is interesting. King Jamyang desired to wage war against the neighbouring kingdom of Purig, but was informed by the horologist that his venture would not be successful unless deferred till after New Year's day. Not wishing to wait, and no doubt thinking the stupid old sun would not notice, he decided that the New Year should begin two months earlier. His anniversary usually falls some time in December. It is chiefly marked by evening illuminations, for every Buddhist house has a row of tiny lamps, small wicks in little receptacles of oil, outlining either window-sill, verandah, or roof, or all three, according to the state of the family exchequer, for kerosene is an expensive commodity by the time the former is carried up to Leh; and of mustard oil and that expressed from apricot kernels there is very little. As most Tibetan villages are built in tiers up the hillside in order to leave the flatter terraces for cultivation, their rows of little lights give quite a fairyland effect. Dominating the whole in Leh is the fine old castle with its row of illuminations, while still higher are the twinkling lights round the crazy verandah of the "Tsemo" or small monastery, perched on its high crags. The official New Year occurs later, and its chief feature is the celebration of *Dosmoche*, the great festival of the Scapegoat. This ceremony varies in different localities. In Leh a huge erection is made of sticks, tied together by twine, and looking like a vastly over-rigged mast. The component parts are prepared previously by the

horologist, and, the day before, this strange ship of the wilderness is erected in the desert just outside Leh.

At about 3 p.m. we wend our way through the bazar, now crowded with folk in holiday mood and holiday attire, and take up our position in the small room built over the toll-gate giving admission to the capital, and underneath which, the procession will pass. The firing of a gun announces that it has left the castle and is descending the hill, and soon we descry it turning into the further end of the main street, near the large Mohammedan mosque. Slowly it approaches us to the droning of shawms, the blowing of trumpets, clanging of cymbals, and beating of drums, all of which go to make up ecclesiastical music. Let us watch them as they pass beneath us. Heading the procession come four lamas in their clerical red garments, and with their funny yellow, peaked hats. These are blowing their flageolets ; after an interval they are followed by two or three laymen, who have the supposed honour of being allowed to carry the *storma*, but one cannot help noticing that the *élite* do not trouble to obtain this distinction for themselves. *Storma* means a thing which is lost, and consists of effigies made in various sizes to represent men and demons. Again comes a group of lamas, dressed up in their fantastic devil-masks, and dancing as they move along. More laymen follow, bearing religious flags, and then there come four priests, blowing shawms so long that two small acolytes precede them, holding up the ends. Thus group after group passes through the gate till the celebrating abbot appears, to be followed by further priests and laymen carrying *storma*. Bringing up the rear are a number of Buddhist horsemen, prominent among them the King. He wears for this ceremony a special hat, which is an imitation of King Langdarma's, from whom he claims descent and of whom he is said to be an incarnation. Langdarma belonged to the old *Bon Chos*, and did his best to exterminate Buddhism in Tibet, positive proof of his demoniacal nature, of which

the two horns which grew from his head were an outward and visible sign. It was to accommodate these he had to have this hat designed.

The procession has now passed through the bazar, and we follow it out to the desert. There the fires have been lit, illuminating the weird devil-dancing lamas as they gyrate and jump round them. At a given moment all the *storma* are thrown into the flames, and with their burning the sin and disease of the town are consumed. Soon after our first arrival in Leh, we witnessed these ceremonies, and, wishing in our ignorance to investigate the effigies, some were bought for a few *pice* (coppers) and brought to our houses. That year a serious epidemic of throat disease broke out in the country, carrying off old and young. What else could be expected when the scapegoats had been brought back into the town instead of being thrown away? Now the erection of twigs is knocked over, and every man makes a mad rush to obtain even a small piece if he can, which is carried home in triumph and placed on one of the outer walls of the house, thus protecting its inmates from disease and death, or, if it is put into their store-room, much blessing will accrue to their grain.

A little later a similar ceremony is performed for the special benefit of the Maharajah. Holy books having been read for seven days, a scapegoat, consisting of an effigy the size of a man, is prepared. Placed in the region of its heart is a bottle of red fluid, and it is then set up in the wilderness. A company of sepoys in smart khaki uniforms marches out behind lamas dressed in fantastic clothes and devil-masks, the combination quite belying Kipling's statement that "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." They take careful aim, even lying down to do so, but in spite of many rounds being fired, the effigy is never hit, and eventually cruder methods have to be adopted for its destruction. This cannot be wondered at, for is not the effigy bewitched?

The idea of the scapegoat is practised in some form or other everywhere in Lesser and Greater Tibet. In some places an actual goat is sent into the wilderness. In others even a man is chosen, who for a whole year has to leave his village and live elsewhere, at the end of which time some other is chosen to bear the sin of the village. It is a fair assumption that formerly this sinbearer was put to death.

Circumambulation, as every good Ladaki can demonstrate, is a splendid means of obtaining merit. Almost any religious object can be walked around. If there is no *chorten*, then walk round a temple containing some god. If you are getting old it is expedient to spend weary hours twirling your prayer-wheel, saying your *Om mani's*, and walking round and round a *mani* wall. Ten times round the great *chorten* at Jhangspa was the daily evensong of one picturesque, friendly old gentleman we used to meet with his prayer-wheel and rosary. If you can get one or two friends to come along too, it is certainly not quite so lonesome, even though they have to walk behind, for one can intersperse one's prayers with quite interesting snatches of conversation. The month in which this is most beneficial is the first of the year, and the greatest merit of all is obtained by going round the Tsemo, the monastery-crowned hill of Ladak, in whose chief temple resides a "Byamspa" god, so high that his head reaches into the second storey. This great *aKorches* (to round) is performed early in the year, by means of measuring your length the whole way along the route. Let us go into the desert to the south of Leh, where twenty to thirty young men are collected who have decided to perform this religious duty. They are drawn up in rows of twos or fours, about eight feet apart. Each man has tied round his waist a sheepskin apron, which hangs down over his knees. This both shields the knees from being cut, and good clothes from being torn. A low mumble begins, all saying the same phrase over and over again, which runs—"All living animals ask for Buddha's

great emancipation." As the emphasis is always placed on the beginning of the mantra, the prayer resembles a pulsating series of sounds. At the same time each man places his hands together in an attitude of prayer, and all simultaneously throw themselves on their knees, then on their chests, then reach out their arms as far as they can, make a mark in the sand or dust, jump up, place their feet on this mark, and then repeat the whole series of movements again; up and down, up and down, they go. After an hour or two they feel ready for refreshments. A nice spot is chosen where the devotees sit round in a circle, and to which lady friends bring tea, flour or *chang*, thereby themselves gaining merit also. The processionists have quite a merry session on these occasions, and will tell you with great virtue how much merit they are acquiring. In fact they are ready to break rank and have a little chat with the passer-by at the end of any series of movements. On resuming each man goes to the place where he left off, and again the prostrations are performed. If fortune smiles, the weather is good, but if not, their clothes are liable to get very dirty, for even a puddle of melted snow must not deflect the merit accumulator. From the desert the procession proceeds through the bazar and the town of Leh, then over a small pass behind the Tsemo, and coming down the other side, ends up in the desert at the spot from whence they started. The whole distance is about three miles, and it takes three days to be covered in this manner. The physical strain must be tremendous, and only the fit could possibly perform it. One might expect these young fellows to look jaded and depressed, but on the contrary they are all quite cheery.

There is, however, an easier method of obtaining merit for those not so strong. Stray old gentlemen, even a picturesque old lady, single or in twos and threes, sometimes an ancient husband and wife, we have seen traversing the same round as those who are prostrating themselves, but doing so at an

ordinary walk, twirling their prayer-wheels and mumbling their *Om mani's* as they go. Strange pathetic little humans they are, set in a vast panorama of snow-covered mountains with giant peaks soaring up into the silences of the clear blue sky, and often in this frosty winter time tramping out their tiny track on a universal white mantle of snow. Then, too, above the temple which houses the "Byamspa" and on the same Tsemo, is another with three other deities. Round this is a most shockingly rickety verandah, which looks as if it might tumble down at the slightest provocation, and no doubt will do so some day. I myself have walked round this in fear and trembling, but now there is a column of men and women, one close on the heels of the other, and round and round the temple they walk, some turning prayer-wheels, and others saying the *Om mani.* Round and round they go until we feel giddy watching them. Even from below, right down in Leh, they can be seen circulating round their giddy parapet.

We now come to Spring, when everything is breaking out into fresh life. At this season the lamas of Sankar remain in their monastery for a whole month, during which special services are held. By this isolation they are deterred from taking life through stepping on insects as they pass along the roads. It is during this time that the service of making "*Chos spun*" is performed, which actually means the "making of the brethren of the religion." Those wishing to join this fraternity fast one whole day, during which they are not allowed to swallow even their own saliva. Then each man throws into a receptacle some personal belonging. The officiating priest takes these out in twos, thus making their owners spiritual brethren, after which ceremony, if one of them makes a feast, he must invite his brother, or if there is a festival, they must send one another presents.

A moveable ceremony is the celebration of the Buddhists' High Mass. Its general likeness to our Christian service makes one wonder whether Tibetan Buddhism did not get its

ritual from Catholic missionaries, who formerly passed through Tibet or were working on the Chinese border of this now closed land. The rosary, the ecclesiastical vestments and mitred hats are also very suggestive of this. Their own explanation can be found in the following story. Raschung, the disciple of the great saint and singer, Milaraspa, was told by his master to fast for seven days, after which he was to go to the bazar where he would meet a Yogi of the name of Tipu, whom he would recognize by the fact that his face was blue, and his conjunctivæ red. He also would be wearing the skin of a striped ántelope, and would be holding his trumpet up towards heaven and blowing it. Having found and identified him, Tipu prophesied to Raschung that he would die in fourteen days. When Raschung returned to Milaraspa with this sad news, his master informed him that he had sent him to Tipu as he was aware of this fact, but that if he fasted another week and then went to the goddess "*Ma chig grube rgyalmo*," she might be prevailed upon to prolong his life. Having followed out these instructions, the goddess inquired from him how much longer he wished to live. He answered "Until I myself feel I wish to die." She granted his request, handing to him the secret of the mystical rites of prolonging life. He lived just as long again, and then departed from this existence when he was eighty-eight years, and at the same age as his master, Milaraspa, died. It is said that these rites have been handed down since then by a regular episcopal succession, the names of those succeeding being actually given.

The auspicious day having been decided on by the *Onpo*, there is to be a celebration in the compound next to our house, so we will go to watch it. Along the length of the private dwelling, which was built recently with a view to religious ceremonies taking place there, runs a verandah raised about five feet above the court-yard in front. In the centre sits the *Skushog* on cushions behind a low ornamented table, on which

is placed at his right hand the holy pot containing the peacock feathers, in front of him the *Dorjhe* (thunderbolt) and bell, and to his left a bowl containing rice. Behind him and to the left is an altar, which is erected in the form of a pyramid by means of steps, on each of which there are a great number of brass bowls containing offerings of butter, rice and water. On the top is an image, most likely that of the tutelary deity of the presiding *Skushog*. In the immediate vicinity of the celebrating lama other priests are present to assist. Behind these on either side sit the more prominent Buddhist laymen of the town, all with heads reverently uncovered. In the court-yard below the verandah, the poorer worshippers are sitting on the ground, with the men generally in front. On inquiry we are told that the celebrating priest has carefully prepared himself for this ceremony. For twenty-four hours he has sat alone in meditation, and, by means of the repetition of many prayers has purified himself from all his sins. While doing this he has the *Tsebum*, or "Vase of Life," in front of him. He suddenly sees the *lha* (the god) enter it and says *Da drub tsar*—"Now it is fulfilled." He then dons his ceremonial hat and comes out to the congregation in order to distribute life to those present. The service begins with the reading of the holy books, by the *Skushog*, who holds in his right hand the bell, which he rings at appropriate moments and in his left the *Dorjhe*, which he turns, whilst the lamas respond every now and again in a sing-song tone of voice, blowing their shawms and clashing their cymbals. The elements are now distributed. In front, walks the *Skushog* with the "Vase of Life" in his hands. Passing along each row, he touches each worshipper's head with it. Behind him follows a priest with the "Wine of Life," of which he pours a small quantity into the cupped hands of each communicant. This is carried reverently to the forehead and to each eye in turn and finally to the mouth to be drunk. The wine is actually only made of water, coloured with saffron

and sweetened with sugar. This distributed, the bread, or "Balls of Life," are administered from a large dish. These are made of barley-flour, and not only does the participant receive one for himself, but he may obtain sufficient balls for those members of his family who were unable to attend. Now the *Skushog* ties a *srungdud* (Keeping knot), and gives one to each person present. He takes a small piece of rag, coloured red or green, makes it into a knot, breathing on it the while. This is then attached to the hat and preserves the the wearer from disease and death. Finally comes the collection, the worshippers filing past and presenting the *Skushog* with salutation scarves, and money.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Crises of Life

IN every country the crises of life—birth, marriage and death—are associated with ceremonies which are full of interesting customs. In busy England, where time is scarce, the wedding day is full of pleasant incidents, and even the funeral day is made impressive. Here, where time is plentiful, these two functions can be drawn out to last a week or more, but it is necessary to arrange that they shall not fall in those seasons when field work demands the energy of all those members of the household who can help.

Let us follow a Ladaki through life, watching him as his turn comes to be the leading personage in these important ceremonies.

Birth here, as in other countries, imposes a number of taboos, not only on the mother, but also on the father, the chief of these being that neither must go into cultivated fields for a whole month, though the main-roads are not forbidden them. Nor may the mother touch any of the utensils for cooking. Soon after the birth of a child, a near male relative comes to the house and into a pot filled with barley he implants an arrow, which brings much luck to the new arrival throughout life. As in ordinary illness the Ladaki thinks it is dangerous to let the patient fall asleep, so sometimes we meet poor mothers, who, fatigued after the strenuous duty of childbirth, are not allowed to recuperate themselves in slumber. As we write these lines, we have a patient who was made to get up the day after her first-born son had arrived,

because she simply could not keep awake otherwise. At the end of a month the burning of incense purifies the mother, and she may again handle the culinary utensils, while the birth-feast is now celebrated, in which all the houses of the village should at least be represented. In Leh, however, with its 8,000 or more inhabitants, this would be almost an impossibility, so this like other ceremonies, has had to be modified. Thus, to see the real customs of the country one must go to the villages. Every guest brings with him to the feast a pot of barley-meal called *Marzan*. All the contributions are now mixed together, and each lady present partakes of the joint dish. This is called the *Dargang*. The *Ming tagches*, which means the "tying-on" of a name, is postponed till a convenient season, this being the coming of a *Skushog*, who is requested to select a suitable designation. Sometimes caution also calls for a postponement of the christening, for evil spirits are keen on boys, and the name may give away the sex. However, if necessary, one can camouflage this by "tying" a girl's name on to a boy. Until the naming, a boy is called *Brogpa*, or his little sister *Brogma*, for what could be more ugly than these old Dardish descendants? Evil spirits prefer pretty children, but would have no desire to carry off a *Brogpa* child! Sometimes *Ming tagches* is quite omitted, and then this opprobrious appellation has to be borne throughout life. Thoroughly to cheat these foolish spirits, it is a good plan to make the children look as hideous as their namesakes by drawing a dirty black mark across the forehead over the bridge to the tip of the nose. Sometimes it is necessary to push the delusion still further. The sad parents have lost three or four children, and how can they save their latest arrival? They have already called it *Brogpa* and made it as hideous as one of these gentlemen, so now only one thing remains to be done—it must be sent to live with these disgusting people, and failing these, to a Mon blacksmith or musician.

At the end of two years the lad's head is shaved, all except a piece of hair, which is the rudiment of his pigtail, and which is now carefully preserved, dressed and well-greased with butter; this being an occasion, it is celebrated gastronomically and no doubt alcoholically.

We now come to the nuptial ceremonies, but it is quite unnecessary to wait for them till years of discretion have arrived, nor does Cupid have much to do with the wounding of Ladaki hearts, although even here there are occasions when the flight of his arrow is mortal. The women of Ladak enjoy a perennial leap-year, for in this country it is as becoming for a woman to be the aggressor in matters of marriage as it is for a man, and perhaps, in this respect, we are "the wrong way round" after all. When the lady is the active party, the husband brought to her house is called a *magpa*, but if she is taken as a bride to his house, she is called a *gnama*. The property belongs to the active partner, irrespective of sex.

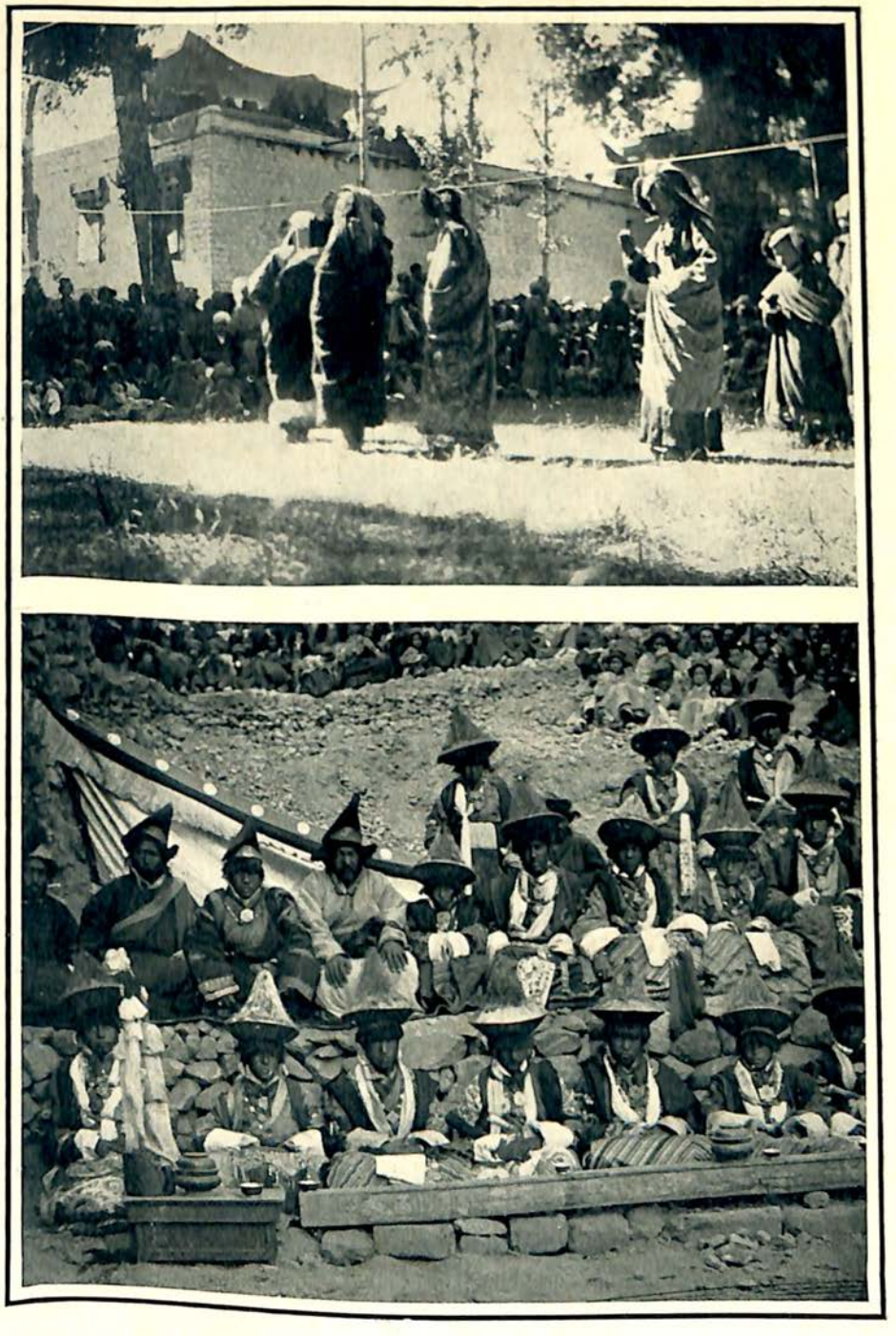
Three methods of getting married are sanctioned by custom. The first has of necessity fallen into disuse since the Ladakis were conquered by the Dogras. It was the prerogative of any rajah or ruler, who wished to reward a man for services rendered, to grant him the power of choosing any girl he liked in the country as his bride. Thus a man of low degree could aspire to the hand of a great lady.

The second method is frankly to steal the chosen partner. The selection having been made, only relatives are admitted into the secret. No big wedding-feast is prepared, just a small one is made where the native beer or *chang* alone is unlimited. Grand wedding-garments are not permissible, and the actual ceremony is very simple, consisting merely in the bride and bridegroom each donning a very small white head-dress, called the *mgo ras*, while there are no religious rites. The *gnama* or *magpa*, as the case may be, has to say "*zhu-le*" to everybody, friend or no friend, hence the proverb: "The bridegroom or bride must say '*zhu*' even to the cat or dog."

The next day a deputation must go to the house from which the passive partner was stolen to say "*zhu*." They are accompanied by a rhetorician, and take with them some jars of beer, some bread, tea, butter and a salutation-scarf. If the parents are amenable to the transaction they accept the presents, and receive the deputation; but if they object to the alliance, the welcome of these representatives is all too warm—they are ejected with kicks and blows, while the parents and their supporters go to the temporary home of their child, try to wreck it, and recover the stolen one by force. Hence another proverb says: "The parents are their children's judges." The causes which precipitate such a stolen marriage are (1) absolute inability to afford the orthodox nuptials; (2) temporary financial disability, as at any future time the arrangement may be ratified with full ceremonials; and (3) if the desired partner is betrothed to someone else, to secure him or her by theft; (4) if the *Onpo's* date does not satisfy the couple, they marry on their own day, and have the official rites on his.

Lastly there is the orthodox wedding with all its attendant ceremonies. For this neither parents nor child must decide on their choice before they have consulted the *Onpo*. To this gentleman they tell the name and date of birth of the prospective mate, and can only proceed if he declares, after searching his books, that year and person are auspicious. Lamas, as a rule, do not provide this information. The marriage may take place when the children are very young, but it is not consummated till after they are twelve, and, even at this tender age, little Ladaki girls sometimes become mothers. Thus the Ladaki parents have to think about the future alliance when the child is still young; as their proverb says: "The difficulty of the father is to get a wife for his son."

Let us follow this father in his difficult path, supposing the child for whom he wishes to find a mate is a son. The first overtures are made by a third party, who must never go



A Birthday Entertainment.

Women dancing at an entertainment in Leh. The gesture indicates the plucking of a flower.

Men Dancers at a Wedding.

Resting between their performances. At the extreme left of the front row is the bridegroom, while the gentlemen in the upper row to the left with peculiar turnover hats are his uncles.

to the house of the bride-elect empty-handed, and the fateful day on which he sets out must be decided by the *Onpo*. If the young lady's parents receive him favourably, more beer must be sent on several occasions, and a series of preliminary feasts, whose principal feature is beer drinking, is inaugurated. The first of these, called *holchan*, is only a small affair, but marks a definite betrothal. Subsequently more *chang* must be taken for the consumption of the relatives of the future bride, and at this feast or *nyenchang* (relation beer), it is decided what presents in kind and in cash these people must be given. The money present is said to be in payment of Nature's provision through the mother for the bride's first earthly nourishment! It may vary from Rs15 to Rs45, while the other presents include twenty-five to forty-five measures of *chang* (600–1,000 quarts), also tea, butter, *p'adings* (the local dried apricots), meat, rice, and salutation scarves.

The next feast is called the *trabschang* (conference beer), and its occasion is the assembly of all the relatives and friends some weeks before the wedding to decide upon and to distribute the responsibility of giving the various articles needed for the actual wedding-feast, such as the provision by the uncle of the bride of the *drangrgyas*, or cake, round which the dances will take place, and all the details of serving the courses are arranged. The menu includes the following courses: (1) Tea; (2) a mixture of wholemeal flour, butter and dried curds, sugar, and tea; (3) *p'adings* and breads; (4) meat and a mixture of flour and water called *Boldra*; (5) beer; (6) *nanchang* or very strong beer, of which each partaker is obliged to drink one whole measure, which makes them thoroughly intoxicated; (7) *zilchang*, another kind of beer; (8) rice.

Nyobjhol is the procedure of fetching the bride (or bridegroom). Those who carry this out are called *nyopas*, and their official costume consists of beautiful silk dresses, and high-crowned, gilt hats. Their number varies from five to

eleven, and they set out early in the morning carrying beer. On their way to the bride's house, they may meet people with beer-pots, around the rims of which are many little pyramids of butter (*kal chor*), and reciprocal generosity supplies all parties with a further opportunity to indulge in "the cup that cheers." They will also find on their road about eighty pyramids of small stones set up, at each of which the leader must make a special speech, and, in the event of his forgetting one or more of these, he must pay some fine. He delivers them in answer to the questions put by a man who is a member of the bride's household. Quite near the house is a flag-staff bearing a flag of five colours, and above it the outline of a bird, while a stick has been hidden in the earth somewhere in front of the door. The leader of the *nyopas* has to find this by means of pacing. At the door they meet the relatives and friends bearing sticks, also the money and goods decided upon at the *nyenchang*. If all promises are paid up, the parties are admitted, but any defaulters are beaten with sticks. Throughout this procedure a boy and a girl (*spawo* and *spamo*) burn incense.

The *nyopas* now enter the house, and have three dances in the living-room, where they are provided with a menu similar to the foregoing one, after partaking of which they proceed outside, where a large crowd of onlookers will have collected, and dance round an erection of bread arranged round a central corpse of meat, flanked by two large pots of *chang*. The dancing includes that by the *spamo*, who dons the bride's dresses, thus exhibiting the trousseau. In the evening the bread is shared out according to the contract made beforehand, the distributor being a member of the house of the bridegroom, whose badge of office is a silk cloth wrapped round his third finger. He is called a *paspun*, and performs this duty for all the members of his clan, who possess the same god and the same vows.

Now comes the time for giving the wedding-presents, and

all go indoors and spend the time dancing until the fateful hour foretold by the *Onpo* arrives, when the actual marriage takes place, and the bride appears. A scribe is present to write down everything which is taken away by the bride in case of a divorce. He, the friends, and the hairdressers will receive presents from the father or uncle. The hair of the bride (or bridegroom) has to be dressed that same evening, and she now puts on a white head-dress, the wearing of which is the actual wedding rite. Her dress is usually an ancient one, which goes from house to house. She comes into the living-room, and sits on a carpet on which the sign of *gyung-drung* (the Swastika) has been made in barley. Across the room a rope is stretched on which the father and mother place the clothes, while on the floor are the pots and pans which they are giving their daughter. The lamas now arrive to perform the *yangkuk* ceremonies (*yang* means blessing, *kuk* calling forth), so that the daughter may not take away with her the blessing of the house. The *nyopas* present each lama with a piece of cloth, which the latter place on their heads ; to the girl's parents they have to give a salutation-scarf, and to her relatives small pieces of white cloth. After this ceremony, the lamas leave, and now the parents of the bride also present her with salutation-scarves, which is a duty of each relative also. The bride then weeps copiously, and lauds all that has been done for her during her life. The leader of the *nyopas* now takes her into the small temple or private chapel of the house to say a last good-bye, for after this day she may never again enter this temple, having married into another *paspun* (clan). She is then taken on a pony to her new home by the *nyopas*, and this happens about midnight, for, if the bride be taken away by day, a fine has to be paid either to the King or to the neighbouring monastery. Before starting, the father and uncle of the bridegroom once more enter the house, and, again presenting salutation scarves and a small sum of money, thank the parents for the gift of the

bride. Before arriving at her future home, the bride and her escort are met by lamas who perform the service of *Gyagsrod*, that is, the driving away of any evil spirits which may have chosen to accompany the bride, and whose presence is not desired in her new abode. For this purpose the members of the future home have sent a new unused pot filled with dregs, which the lamas, after preliminary incantations, break, and with it throw away a *storma* or strewing oblation.

The lamas now enter the bridegroom's house, and the leader of the *nyopas* follows with the bride. Her new mother-in-law comes to meet her on the threshold of the living-room, bringing a plate on which is a present reposing on some barley, which latter serves to enhance the apparent size of the former. This plate is given to the bride's-maid, or *spamo*, but before receiving it, the bride must salute her new mother, who reciprocates the greeting. The mother then leads her into the living-room, where, if she is only to marry one boy, she finds him sitting on a carpet, bearing the mystic sign and wearing the white head-dress; but if the brothers are also included, they all sit similarly side by side, while near them is an empty carpet for her, upon which is the sign "*nor bu gyas a kyil*," meaning "jewel."

When all, including the *nyopas*, are thus seated in a row, the bridegroom's mother rises and salutes the *nyopas* in turn, after which the bride and bridegroom are taken into the store-room and given refreshments, the leader of the *nyopas* accompanying them. Their plates having been filled, the leading *nyopa* removes their head-dresses, putting them on a plate. Then he says, "Which is quicker, bride or bridegroom?" at which challenge they compete with each other at snatching the food off their plates. In this little store-room the happy couple live for some days, and each of the near relatives brings them a small piece of the *drangyas* (cake) and presents. The *nyopas* spend the night dancing at the house, with only the shortest interval for sleep.

The next day there is dancing again in front of a crowd of spectators, and in the afternoon or evening of this day the bride also comes out to dance. If the bridegroom is only a *magpa* (that is, brought to the bride's house), he has to dance with the *nyopas* all day long. On this day the feasting proceeds according to the aforesaid menu, which is the same in both houses, and in the evening the *brangyas* are divided up and distributed, those in the bride's house being made of flour. Early in the morning of this day the bride and bridegroom have to go to salute the parents of the former, and the following night is again spent in dancing and feasting. Throughout, the *nyopas* and relatives take food and drink to the wedding pair, who also are invited to meals by the cook, brewer, and keeper of the store-room respectively, and whose hospitality they must return, while they must not omit to give food and a *jau* (As 3¼) per head to the *bedas* or bandsmen. This same evening the *nyopas* receive presents from the house, where dancing again takes place.

The following day is called the *nyendron* (relative feast) of the bridegroom. If the guests invited by the bride amount to one hundred, at the bridegroom's feast there will be one hundred and fifty visitors, such a proportion always being maintained.

The next day is called the *dronchung*, to which only the nearest relatives come, while a final day's feasting provides the servants with their turn, and so the festivities slowly wane.

By custom, nobody is permitted to marry the relatives of either parents. Only on rare occasions very distant connections are married, for instance, if they are removed three or four generations. This close relationship is called *Rtsibma*, indicating that they are of one rib, whereas the ordinary word for relation signifies "of one race." In ancient times nobody was allowed to marry a personal relation unless removed by eight generations.

If the happiness of the couple inaugurated with such

gaiety does not stand the test of time, divorce can be obtained by payment of an animal. The Ladaki proverb thus states the situation : " If the husband is turned out he can demand a pony, but the wife can expect a cow." The horse and cow given need only be strong enough to walk round a dunghill. If one of the pair dies and was the owner of the house, the living partner is tied by a piece of string to the corpse of the other, and when the string is broken by pulling on it, the marriage-tie is also broken. Such means are only resorted to if the living partner wishes to leave the house, but he or she may remain if preferred. In the former case nothing need be paid on leaving the house, and the party's own goods may be taken away also. Thus each takes his or her own property, and the one who was brought to the house must also pay for a large part of the wedding festivities.

Obviously the easiest method of marrying is by stealing, after which it is also much easier to divorce. An additional advantage to the young people is that they may choose each other instead of being subject to their parents' selection. Also little care is taken to preserve class.

If the divorcée returns to her parents' home, she is not allowed to enter her parents' temple, and sometimes she is not even allowed to sit in front of their fire-place, because at marriage she joined another *paspun*.

A man or woman may marry a second time, but there are no wedding festivities. Should the first wife bear her husband no children, he may take a second one or *Chanchung*. If possible she should be the younger sister of the first wife, if not, a cousin or near relation. If she produces no posterity, the husband must do without. The first wife retains priority of rank. even though the second becomes a mother. If a *magpa* and his bride have no children, a *Chanchung* is brought for the *magpa*, she being a near relative of the heiress.

Before leaving the subject of marriage, we must say a little more about the customs of polyandry, as Ladak is one

of the few countries remaining where it still obtains. Various economical reasons have been urged for this unusual procedure. The foremost is that it arose in order to keep down the population in a land where sustenance of the body is so hardly won from the dry soil, and the difficulty of transport necessitates any small community being self-contained. A second is that where the nomadic life prevailed, it was inconvenient to trail many women and children around. But a Ladaki himself will tell the questioner that the custom is of royal institution, and is for the stabilizing of property. If each of several sons possessed wife and family, how could they all be supported on one landhold? Certainly the component parts, after dividing into three or more shares, would not be sufficient for any one family. This, therefore, is a different way of stating the first reason alleged, and the present method of tenure is much more economical. The wife is brought for the elder son, and, as a matter of fact, only one more brother is likely to share the lady's favours. The third son is probably given to the Church, and any more pass into other families as *makpas*. The *makpa* leaves his father's home and gods, as we have seen, adopts those of the heiress to whom he is wedded, and, when either of his parents dies, he is not allowed even to touch the corpse, though he may officiate fully in the case of the dead bodies of his bride's parents. As our Buddhist serving-man put it: "My daughter is of no profit to my corpse, save to say 'Father, Father!' and weep, and throw a little barley behind me, but she must not touch me." So does the marriage tie really become firmer than the relation between parents and offspring. In upper Ladak, therefore, more than two brothers rarely share one wife, as it is impossible, practically, for more than that number to avoid quarrelling. If the eldest son approves of this second bridegroom, and thinks that they will be able to share their wife peaceably, the younger man is included in the wedding ceremony. The white head-dress is given to him also by the

chief bridegroom, and the marriage-tie is as binding on him as on his elder brother. In lower Ladak, however, where more of the men-folk are away from home trading or travelling, the link is said to be bearable between as many as five brothers. The house and the land and all the children belong to the eldest brother, whether the latter are his begetting or his brothers', and the younger inherits all if the former predeceases him. Hence the word for uncle is always *Aba Chungun*, "little father."

At length must come the time when the Ladaki's "silver cord is loosened," and his "golden bowl broken." He does not, however, believe that his spirit returns to God who gave it, but that it seeks a new habitation in one of the six existences, decided by the deeds done in the life just ended. Immediately the soul has set forth on this quest, the lama is hurriedly fetched to read from the holy books and pronounce various charms. The nearest relative must now break the corpse's neck, thus setting free its spirit, and the body is then rolled up and tied into a ball as far as this is possible. It is then carried by one of the *paspun* into the family temple, or private chapel, of the house. Nobody but a *paspun* is ever allowed to touch the corpse, and if no male one exists, a woman has to perform this duty. A candle is now lit, and food and drink provided for the soul, which would suffer much during its search for a fresh tabernacle were it not alleviated by the sustenance thus prepared. This is done for about one month. An appeal is then made to the *Onpo*, whose researches settle the date and even the time when cremation may be performed. In the meantime mourners attend the house, who join the family and their friends in bewailing the deceased with loud tones, and help them to consume much butter-tea and flour. Every newcomer provokes a fresh outburst of expression of sorrow. The nearest female relation puts on her oldest clothes, and shows her bereavement by looking as dishevelled and dirty as possible.

The date of the funeral has arrived, and the brother of the departed must carry his corpse from the temple into the street. If there is no brother, his wife, assisted by a *paspun*, does this duty. Here the body is placed into a kind of box, which any man may now carry on his back to the burning-ghats out in the desert. The procession is formed by relatives, friends and lamas. The body is placed into an oven made of mud-bricks, consisting merely of four walls with an opening at the bottom into which the firewood is placed. The corpse is consumed to the reading of holy books, clashing of cymbals, and blowing of the flageolet, while butter, rice, water and barley are thrown into the consuming fire to provide sustenance for the soul of the departed. The cortège then returns home, where the dead man's effects are given to the priests to reward them for their services. In the case of a woman, however, her ornaments go to her eldest daughter, if she has one ; if not, the lamas may auction them and retain the money. Next morning a relative goes to inspect the ashes. If the footprints of a dog can be discerned in these, the deceased's soul will speedily be re-incarnated. Some of these ashes are then made into a small idol of Buddha or a tiny *Chorten* by mixing with clay, and these are placed inside some large *Chorten*. Should the dead man belong to some opulent family, his relatives, having ascertained what would be a propitious holy banner, will have one prepared and hung up in the family temple.

In Tibet proper the general method of disposing of the dead is to expose the body, which has first been dismembered, to the vultures, or throw it to the fishes, or bury it. Cremation is reserved for priests or those of high rank. Here, in Lesser Tibet, however, most corpses are burnt. But even in their burial rites, these folk are the " wrong way round," for when cremation is most expedient, they bury. Has a man or woman died of infectious disease, his body is committed to the ground, to be disinterred and cremated about a year later.

Two more exceptional methods of the disposal of the corpse remain. If a child dies, a brick is taken out of the living-room wall, its small body placed inside, and thus immured. A lama of high rank is said to be well salted first, and then placed inside a *Chorten*. This, however, has been vigorously denied.

To conclude this chapter perhaps we may recount the following amusing story of how the people of Kyelang tried unsuccessfully to cheat the King of Death. An old lady was near dissolution, and, wishing to save her from the dread potentate, her relatives made an effigy of her, taking scrupulous care that this should be her exact size, then dressed it up in her clothes. A proper mourning with much wailing was then instituted, after which the effigy was carried out to the desert for cremation with full ceremonies. A man was then told off to return to the village shouting, "This poor woman has now been dead nine days," for which service he was rewarded with a pair of grass shoes. But, alas! Death saw through the fraud, and took the dame as well.

CHAPTER XIX

Rajahs & Royalties

ALTHOUGH the glory has departed from the present scion of a long line of rulers, yet we must speak of the King, who, although only an ex-ex-King, is still regarded by the true Ladaki as his sovereign lord, for as he walks along the road, his subjects bare their heads and bend low, whilst he touches them in blessing, for not only is he king, but priest also.

Let us, however, begin at the beginning and speak first of a dynasty of true Ladaki Kings, for although the present line has reigned for well-nigh a thousand years, yet even they are interlopers from the Central Tibetan Kingdom. In the monastery of Lamayuru, there is a record telling of how the upper part of the Indus valley was uninhabited desert, whilst in the lower dwelt the "Brogpas," who were continually fighting one another. At that time the site on which Lamayuru now stands was a lake, proof of which we still have to-day in the large lacustrine deposits to be found there. It was just before the time of the Buddhist reformer, Atisa, that the great King Khri dPon bHag rDar Skyabs ruled, his kingdom extending from the Zogi La to the Kardong, and his son enlarged this territory by adding villages in Kashmir and a part of Lahoul. This line of kings did much to civilize the country, and was the first to introduce Buddhism. It is regrettable that more is not known of these rulers. How their power waned and the Lha Chen dynasty from Central Tibet usurped their power has still to be elucidated. The

first of these to rule in Lesser Tibet was Skyid Lde Nyima Gon, the great-grandson of the apostate King Langdarma. He took the reins of government about 950 A.D. The names of most of the kings of this dynasty include the word "Lha Chen," which means "great god," or "King of Heaven," and the Ladaki will explain how Langdarma counted among his forbears one who ruled in Central Tibet about 300 B.C., and was descended through King Kesar from that Supreme Being. But who is this ancient King Kesar? Let us listen to one of the many wonderful stories extant of his mystical birth and heroic doings. The tale was narrated by Zodpel, our Moravian Mission Hospital Compounder, anaesthetist, dresser, and nurse, as follows.

Our great forefather sowed a tree, out of whose fruit grew worms which devoured each other till only one was left. It was transformed into a boy, who married eighteen girls, and these in turn became the respective mothers of eighteen heroes, around each of whom a wonderful story is woven. One of them aided the King of Heaven against the Demons, and in reward had his wish granted, namely that Dundrub, the son of the Celestial King, should be sent to rule this earth. Dundrub died in heaven, but descending as a hail-stone, was swallowed on earth by a woman, and being re-born through her mouth returned to the earth-life as Kesar. Having attained maturity, Kesar left his country of Ling, and went to the "Horyul," the land of the north (now identified with Chinese Turkestan) to slay Akyung, the Demon King, whose widow he then married. She, wishing him to forget his home, and the wife he had left behind, drugged his food with a magic potion. During his absence the Turks came and conquered the country, killing his sons Buma and Labtsan, and taking captive a third son, Skelebuchung, with his mother Bruguma, Kesar's Queen. His castle they razed to the ground, the women, whose beauty equalled that of the fairies, were pulled about by their glorious tresses, whilst the heroes

were chained by their necks. As fireplaces the Turks used golden hills, and their tents were pegged down with silver mountains. So terrible was the distress in the country that in desperation a council of all the families was called, over which the uncle of Kesar presided. After earnest deliberation they determined to send news of their distress to the King. A pair of cranes were caught, consecrated, and entrusted with the news of their trouble, but, although they flew to all the four continents of the world, they could not find him, for they had omitted to search a certain nose-shaped valley, and were sent off again, this time to be successful in their quest. In the meantime the spells of the Demon Queen had worked so perfectly that Kesar had forgotten home and wife, but one night he dreamed that he had seen a red wind blowing out of the sky, which had carried away his wife Bruguma and killed his sons, and that an army had taken his castle of Ling, destroyed his golden altars, were washing their utensils in his beautiful bowls, drying them with his own silken garments. Telling his dream to the She-Devil, she said that for every hundred dreams which come true, a thousand do not, and increased the strength of her potions of forgetfulness. But this availed her nothing, for one day Kesar heard the cranes, although she tried to drown their cry. Realizing they had a message for him, he invited them to descend and give him their news. This they did, and dropping an emetic into Kesar's mouth, he vomited the potion and found his dream had indeed come true. Arising, he went in search of his horse, and finding him, told him that he had to carry his master to Bruguma. His horse replied, reproaching him for having ever left her, the wife who had loved him, had patted him, fed him with barley, butter and sugar, had washed his sleek body with milk, and clothed him with silver trappings, and for having fallen a prey to the wiles of the Demon Queen, who had given him bad food, and so many heavy loads to carry that his back was covered with sores. This so angered Kesar that he

slung a stone at him, but missed, for the horse had got behind a rock. The steed then said to his master, "Oh thou with the big head without brains, thou donkey without long ears, thou ox without horns, look at my sore back! How can I carry you? But quickly take the lancet placed by my good queen Bruguma in my left ear, and cut out my sores, then wash them with the lotion in my right ear, and I will get well immediately and bear you back to Ling." No sooner said than done, and they returned. Kesar re-conquered the country, liberated his Queen and her sons, and they lived happily ever after.

Thus runs the story, and to-day we have in Ladak two representatives of this hero King, for Kesar is re-incarnated in both father and son, Kings of Ladak. The question may be asked how the young King can be a re-incarnation of King Kesar during the lifetime of his father who is also a re-incarnation of the same? This is perfectly easy to explain, for Kesar appeared in many disguises, and they are incarnations of two of these. In like manner, the Queen Mother and the reigning Queen, both living, are each a re-incarnation of one goddess, the White Tara. In the case of the two Kings we have definite proof of this fact, for they have both of them a squint, although the son has only acquired his after years of practice. It would seem strange in most countries for the son to be reigning while his father is still alive, but, in this back-to-front country, the heir-apparent, on reaching manhood, has for long been made co-ruler with his father. At the present time they have gone a step further, for the Father King has retired to a hermitage, where he tells his beads, says his *Ommanis*, and prepares himself for his next incarnation. The coronation of the present King took place soon after we arrived in Leh, and all the missionaries and their children were invited to be present at the ceremony. So on the morning of the coronation day we were requested to send up the chairs on which we were to sit. The Tibetan word for a chair, by the way, is *Khriushing*, which means a wooden

throne, so that we also were enthroned, but not on a raised platform. Although it was still winter, the afternoon sun was extraordinarily hot, as we toiled up the hill on which stands the castle, above the tiers of houses which form the chief part of Leh. This is a fine building, erected some three hundred years ago. It consists of nine storeys, and is built of stone and mudbricks. So high is it that the walls have had to be built with a slight slope inwards to keep them from bulging out. The roof is perfectly flat with a balustrade running all round. When the King or *Skushog* is in Leh, a band of lamas with shawms and trumpets stand at the edge of this to salute them, and make a charming picture outlined against the sky.

We entered under the porch, gaudily decorated with many colours. Above us, and on each side were gargoyles, which it was formerly possible to propel outwards and thus frighten the King's enemies. We walked along a dark passage, and up a flight of rude stone steps. This took us past the Royal Temple, in which are a few images, and a small library which could no doubt tell us a good deal about former kings who ruled here, but what we noticed most was a large heap of black leaves, inscribed with golden letters, which have been thrown on the floor in an untidy heap. They were placed there by the Dogra conquerors, and nobody has ever taken the trouble to sort them. Our way then ascended a rough wooden stairway, and, we eventually entered a large room. This was now filled with many people of high and low degree. In a corner a platform was raised about four feet above the people, and on it were enthroned the Incarnation of Hemis with the young King on his left. We were given seats in front, and had a plate of food placed before us. Hardly had the last member of our party been served, when a leading Ladaki came to us, thanked us in the politest and most elegant language he could command for the trouble we had taken in coming up to the castle on such a hot day, and hinted that we

might wish to be busy elsewhere. Understanding that they would prefer our room to our company, we again wended our way down the hill. During our short stay in the room of enthronement, no ceremonies whatever were performed, and no word was spoken. There sat the *Skushog* and the new King like two graven images. We asked them what they did to crown their King, and they replied that he was allowed to sit on a throne as high as that of the *Shushog*. But we could not help feeling that the haste with which they got rid of us indicated that we were not to see the real ritual, as the influence of our Occidental presences would not be auspicious, yet we appreciated the friendly spirit which did not wish to omit us entirely from their important celebrations.

The Royal ladies, too, have always given a welcome to visitors from Western lands, whether it be the missionary "Memsahibs," who live in Leh all the year round, or the summer travellers who may be taken to pay their respects to the reigning house at Stog.

When the family come to Leh for their winter visit, their presence being necessary at the great festivals of the New Year and *Dosmoche*, we usually go up to the castle to pay them a call. We first inquire if it would be convenient for us to come on a given afternoon, sending a present of a cabbage, turnip or some potatoes, all of which are real luxuries in this part of the world, and hardly grown at all outside our own and the Commissioner's compounds. The time having been fixed, we are led into the sitting-room of the two Queens, and take our seats near them on nice Tibetan rugs, well-padded underneath. The little princesses, aged about two and seven on the last occasion, were very interested in the foreign ladies and the baby especially was delighted at receiving a rubber doll with a squeak. Butter-tea, of course, was served, and a special brand of sweet shortbread made in the royal household provided. Once when we went down to Kashmir, the old Queen Mother kindly sent over a dozen of these, wrapped in a

LAMAYURU.

"A fit capital for Hobgoblinland," shewing the monastery crowning the hill. Many chortens can be seen dotted about. The nuns' dwellings are below the hill in the foreground.

bit of Indian newspaper to help us on the road, while her daughter-in-law sent a request for some mercury (called in Tibetan "silver water") for what purpose we could not gather, and also asked if we could refill for her a bottle of scented hair oil. Once the two Queens repaid our winter call, and came to visit us in the compound. In the morning they sent down to know if we would kindly provide a magic lantern show by way of an entertainment, for they knew the Mission possessed such an instrument, but in the Doctor's house we had other resources, for a Christmas tree had been made for the children, and we had this illuminated for our visitors. Removing all central furniture, we arranged little tables in front of small rugs and mats round the room, and, what with the ladies-in-waiting and attendant lamas, every place was filled, and our small room soon needed airing. On the tables we could only provide dry food, such as apricots, sugar, sweets, walnuts and sultanas, for they would not partake of anything we had cooked, and with our gramophone to entertain them, our guests seemed to enjoy their evening. We had to explain carefully of course, that the lighted Christmas tree was not an object of worship, but put up for the children's pleasure, while our Christian Hospital nurse briefly told our Christmas story as illustrated by little picture cards hung from the tree. But perhaps the greatest thrill of the evening was a tour of the sahib's house, where the bed-rooms and kitchen, and the baby sleeping quietly alone in the dark, caused the greatest interest.

The castle of Leh, however, is not the usual abode of their Majesties, the King is in residence there only during the first Buddhist month of the year, and on other special occasions, and when the waters of the village where he resides in summer are all frozen, and must be melted before using. At other times he has his quarters in the castle of Stog, which lies a three hours' ride from Leh on the opposite side of the Indus. When Zorowar conquered the great-grandfather of the present young King, he banished him there, and since then Stog is

the only village from which he is allowed to take the revenue. His whole income has been computed at about Rs4000, approximately £260 per annum, which leaves little margin to one who is still supposed to entertain on a royal scale. His castle stands on the side of the hill ending a spur from the main range ; it is entered through a court-yard, through which, up various steps, we reach a large room—the royal living room. In one corner is the King's altar, next to that a bed with bedding rolled up. This is where his Majesty seeks repose, while his Queen and his Mother sleep on the floor. We are received by the King, who shakes both our hands. The two ladies, too, give us a hearty welcome, first the elder, whose cataract we had extracted some years ago, and then the younger. We are requested to sit on rugs spread on the floor, and soon have various Ladaki dishes placed before us, most of them very tasty, even to Western appetites, although we can hardly include the butter-tea in this category. Conversation flows easily, for there is much to say and many questions to ask and answer. Among other things, the reigning Queen informs us that her husband has no head for figures, so that she has to be the business manager, and she certainly looked capable of seeing to the temporal affairs of the realm. When it comes to those of a spiritual nature, however, his lady has to leave the leadership to him, and the number of his ecclesiatical responsibilities is quite considerable. Before the New Year, the horologist has to tell him of dangers to come, and to advise him what scriptures must be read to avoid them. Every month, for six days at least, the lamas must read *chos* (religion), and must be fed with two pots of tea, soup containing wheaten flour, two earthenware pots of beer, twenty measures of parched barley-flour, besides one pound of butter to decorate the offerings which are made of barley-flour, and ¼ lb. of oil for their lamps. On the 15th and 18th of every month, no meat may be eaten, or the *lhus* (spirits of the underworld) will be annoyed. From

the 25th of the tenth month till the 3rd of the eleventh month, eight lamas from Hemis have to come to read services for the stabilization of his throne. One cannot help thinking that these must have become slack in their devotions! At other times the gods of peace and war have to be propitiated by further reading. By the time all these ceremonies have been performed, there cannot be many days on which the lamas have not to be rewarded for services rendered, and—all on about Rs4,000 per annum.

Then he himself has his matins and evensong to read. Even before the family has risen he must get up and read his *chos*, and after they have retired he has to perform more ceremonies.

So pass the days of this monarch; little of interest occurs in his life, which is filled up with a monotonous round of senseless readings of holy books, which neither he, nor those who read, try to understand. The word "Ichabod" might indeed be written over the house of Namrgyal.

Although the Rajah of Stog, as he is termed, is the chief ruler in this country, there are other royalties of minor importance, thus the "King of Marshro" has but one village under his sway. His eldest son will rule in his stead one day, whilst the powers which decide in what bodies *Skushogs* reincarnate have fortunately discovered in his younger son, the new Bacola, the *Spitug Skushog*.

In Zankskar we have already met a King, who is also a *Skushog*, in fact, he is prouder of his priestly office than of his royal rank, and stranger still is the custom of that country, where the heir apparent to the throne is the second son and not the eldest, who becomes a proper lama.

Whilst we were in Padam, the capital of Zankskar, a poor old gentleman called on us in our tents with a few dried apricots and some candy sugar. After some time we found that he was the real scion of the royal house of Zankskar, but his ancestor had lost his crown by trying to oppose Zorowar,

the enemy of his country. This poor "pretender" had got himself into trouble for wishing to rebuild the monastery on the hillock near his house, for this harmless action was construed into a desire to rebuild the fort and oppose Kashmir.

So we have many heads entitled to wear the crown in Lesser Tibet, but any uneasiness they may experience is generally due, not to the cares of sovereignity, but to the lack of that which is necessary for its due display.

CHAPTER XX

Demons, Dances & Dinners

IN this country in which practically all the religious ritual is of the old demon worship origin, one would expect to find belief in the possession of man by demons. The Ladaki at any rate does not doubt the reality of such possession, and one is inclined to think that in spite of much fraud, there is a substratum of fact in it. Discussing this matter with a colleague one day, he affirmed that he had once had a woman patient who "really was possessed by a devil," and, in reply to the query as to how he had treated her, he said that a good dose of castor oil had cured her! However, the reader shall judge for himself from the following experiences.

Some years ago we heard that in Marshro, a village situated a day's march from Leh, two brothers would become possessed by two very fierce demons, and my colleague and I decided to investigate the performance. Having arrived there, we were given a nice large room in the monastery, which proved somewhat too airy, as the time of year was mid-winter and one side of our apartment was completely open to the wintry air. However, by donning the rough native sheepskin coats, and ignoring their smell, we managed to make ourselves fairly comfortable, especially when we, with our servants, sat round a large pot of steaming Irish stew. As we enjoyed this warming and welcome dish, our table companions, waxing loquacious, told us of how these demons originally came from Central Tibet to reside in

Ladak, and how they were now the fiercest in the whole country. They said that these special demons always take possession once a year of two men belonging to two definite Marshro families. Sometimes they are the same two men for a number of successive years, at others they vary. The afflatus always occurs during the first Buddhist month. Should the chosen candidate be a new one, he has to prepare himself from three to four months before, but otherwise one is sufficient. When the time has arrived these two men, generally, if not always, lamas, repair to a mountain retreat. Here they sit in a box, which is so made that they can neither lie down, nor assume any attitude other than that of sitting absolutely upright, and they are only allowed out for a very short space of time in the morning, afternoon and evening. They do not divest themselves of their clothes the whole time, and so cramped do they become that a rope is fixed above their heads by which to pull themselves up. During this month they are supplied with food from the neighbouring monastery of Marshro. Their duties consist in the reading of holy books, and the innumerable repetitions of *Om manis*. The month completed, a crowd of people ride up to their retreat to escort these *Lhapas*, god-men as they are now called, back to the monastery. There can be no doubt of their possession now, for whilst the ponies of all their companions get very tired on this journey, those of the *Lhapas* are absolutely fresh throughout. Our informants then tell us of how the *Lhapas* will on the morrow cut themselves with swords without drawing blood, will run about on giddy heights without falling, and will foretell the future.

Next day we took our seats on the balcony overlooking the monastery courtyard with great expectations of a really thrilling show. There was a large crowd present, and soon an ordinary lama's dance was performed below us. These in their demon-masks were shortly joined by the *Lhapas*,

who were naked to the waist, and, whilst dancing, each waved about a sword which he carried in his right hand. At a given moment this weapon was brought across the other bare arm, but immediately it had arrived there, and before any harm could be done, several lamas rushed to them, pulled the swords away, and begged them not to harm themselves, a request in which they seemed only too pleased to acquiesce. This performance rather reminded one of the lamas of whom Waddell tells, who, when wearing the "sky-soaring" hat, have to be held down firmly to keep them from floating right out of sight. Our *Lhapas*, having tried to cut themselves several times, and being just as often restrained, eventually repaired with the other dancers into the temple. We sent a request that we might be allowed to come to examine them, which they granted. There we found two young men whose faces were rather pleasant, but in whose eyes there certainly was a strange, strained, wild look. They showed us their arms on which we descried a small straight scratch, but no blood! On closer examinaton we concluded that they had cut themselves some days before, had allowed this to scab over, then merely had to remove the scab and "they were able to cut themselves with swords, but without drawing blood"!

We now watched the second act. This begins with another devil dance, in the middle of which the two *Lhapas* rush to the top of the monastery running along the outer edge of the wall, with a distinctly nasty drop to one side of them, or jumping down from fairly high distances, an acrobatic feat which I personally would not like to perform, but one, on the other hand, which any good English gymnast with a little practice and a good head for dizzy heights, or a professional steeplejack, would find no difficulty in emulating.

Now came the grand final achievement—the act of prophesying events to come during the ensuing year. We noticed the *Lhapas* going from group to group, beginning with the royal family, and again we sent a polite message, asking them

whether they would mind paying us a kind visit. They agreed and soon stood before us, dancing about from one leg to the other in a state of great excitement. My colleague then held out his purse and asked them to tell him how much money it contained. This excited them still more and they exclaimed, "You are trying us—we will not be tried—we will not answer." Then they turned to me, and, after a few flattering remarks as to my medical work for their country, which were meant to make me amenable, they asked me what I desired to know, to which I replied that I wished them to tell me the next question I would ask them, having beforehand told my colleague what this would be. This caused a fresh outburst of fury in which they departed from us in anger, and we from them in disgust at the fraud perpetrated on these credulous folk. It is difficult not to label the whole thing a big lie, for from Lahoul come the weirdest stories. Thus we have been told that here the *Lha* often inhabits the beam of a house. Wishing to have a walk, the beam is shouldered by men, who carry "him" up hill and down dale in the most extraordinary manner. If they essay to take the *Lha* in an undesired direction, the god shows his disapproval by becoming heavier. He eventually indicates the house in which he wishes to take up his residence by again becoming more ponderous. Generally this occurs near the habitation of some opulent Buddhist. At other times a still more ingenious method is resorted to in order to ascertain the wishes of the *Lha*. A mirror is carried in front of and facing the beam, and the reflections therein show the god's wishes to perfection. We were told that sometimes the *Lhapas*—these godmen—disagree, and have to have their disputes settled by the English Christian Commissioner. It is really rather strange that often the god takes possession of a man of the blacksmith caste, although he is despised, and yet the moment he becomes the habitation of the god, he is, of course, regarded with much respect.

A similar rise in the social scale occurs with the Spiti magicians, who visit Ladak every summer. These gentlemen are of quite low caste in their own country, but here they are addressed in the language of respect, being known as the *Mani-pas* or "prayer-men." Wearing long red robes, they are, however, distinguished from lamas by the absence of caps, and by long hair plaited up in braids, close to their heads in front and hanging down to their waists behind, giving a curiously effeminate effect to their moustached faces. Their entertainments are closely bound up with religion, in fact their name, the *Mani-pa*, has been given to them on account of this and their constant attention to their hand *manis* or prayer-wheels. When about to give a show, they first arrange an altar in the form of a couple of banners behind a table with sacred lamps and vessels for barley and other offerings. In front of this they dance with swords, at first slowly, then with increasing excitement until the climax is reached by running forward, placing their feet on the ground, raising their bodies, and apparently balancing them on the points of their swords, which are placed in the armpits, abdomen, or even cheeks. This effect is really achieved by sufficiently straightening and stiffening the arms. They also pierce their cheeks, through an old scar, with swords and long needles. Their masterpiece of magic is the breaking of a large stone by one of them on the abdomen of the other. This, of course, is preceded by a lot of incantation and dancing round the latter, who lies on his back on the ground with the small boulder balanced carefully on his abdomen, and, at the right moment, this is made to fall apart into two halves by beating upon it with a big stone. For some days previously the actual boulder is sought for on the desert hillside around with considerable trouble and selected with great care, while the one on whom it is balanced has to hold his breath throughout the performance of the trick. They also beat the abdomen with swords, which process is also rendered harmless by the trick of inflation.

Unfortunately this performance of breaking the boulder has twice led to fatalities in Ladak, by children trying to imitate it on one of their small companions.

But, besides the dancing of monks and magicians, Ladak has its own country dances for pure pleasure. Perhaps the ordinary women's dancing has a slight religious element, for in the course of it, the right hand is raised, and the gestures made to signify the plucking of a flower, the opening out of the bud into blossom, and then its presentation to the gods. But even these motions of the hand are said to originate in the old Dard custom of greeting each other by raising the arm, and moving the closed fist to and fro. The rest of the dance is very slow and monotonous, though Ladakis themselves never seem to tire of it, and it is performed on every festive occasion. The ladies certainly look quite picturesque with their broad well-turquoised *perags*, their gay capes, quaint turned-up embroidered shoes, and wristlets of chased silver or white shell, which they knock together in respectful salutation to the King, or presiding official, at the beginning and end of the dance. Their capes in winter are of long white sheeps' wool, covered on the outside with large squares of green and red cloth. In the heat of summer they are replaced by fringed capes with Kashmir or Yarkandi embroidery, or, better still, beautifully worked Chinese silk. The women who take part in these dances are members of a certain superior grade of the farming land-owners, each household of which has to provide a woman dancer for the King, who must come whenever he summons her. There is thus nothing of the immoral Indian nautch about this historical country dance. The services of these respectable women are especially exacted in winter, when for some days at the New Year and the festival of *Dosmoche* they must dance daily. In return for this they enjoy the food and festivities of the royal household. Formerly there were about thirty, now only seven usually turn out, who certainly cannot claim to have been

selected for either their youth or beauty. Other dances, such as the "pigeon" dance occur, in which both sexes join, though without touching each other as in the West, and the "shoulder" dance of women only, in which movement of the shoulder are prominent. In the *shondros*, also a woman's dance, the partners face each other, then wheel round till they come back to back, afterwards slowly reversing again till they face once more. At the end of the horse-racing in the New Year, a dance occurs in the middle of the bazar in which the women stand in a circle, and the men dance round them in pursuance of an old custom connected with royalty. A dance for both sexes, called the "peacock dance," has its song about that bird. Otherwise the Ladaki dancing differs from that of Tibet, which is said to be always accompanied by singing.

It has now become practically an annual event for the Wazir to have a display in honour of the British Joint Commissioner, at which other dances and plays are seen, and the stage properties of Leh obtain their yearly airing. To this *ltadmo* any Europeans who happen to be in Leh at the time are hospitably invited. The programme usually begins in the afternoon between two and three o'clock, when it is opened with some sort of prayer for His Imperial Majesty and H.H. the Maharajah of Kashmir. The former may take the form of "God Save the King" sung by the Boys' School in English with their own peculiar accent. The boys of the State School then act a little play, more or less in costume, and always with a very powerfully pointed moral; and, of late, a demonstration of Boy Scouts of both State and Mission Schools has become a feature of the programme. This may be followed by a lama dance in devil-masks, and tea is usually served between four and five p.m. For this the *élite* withdraw from the covered balcony, from which they have been watching the performance, to tents or a simple pagoda in the Wazir's pleasant garden behind. The Europeans have one tent, the

King and a *Skushog*, if present, and one or two Leh Buddhists of high rank, another, Hindu and Mussulman officials have their separate resorts, and any other slightly less prominent townsmen or traders have their own places. The Europeans are provided with an English tea, for which, with good luck, the butter in the cakes is not too strong. After this refreshment they may adjourn to the adjoining polo ground to watch a match there.

The hours from six to eight are usually labelled "rest" on the programme, and we return from our homes to dine in the Wazir's house at eight. The number of Sahibs in Leh entertained thus lavishly, once reached seventeen, and the record number of courses at such a dinner was fifteen, but, on this occasion we were also celebrating the birth of a son to the Wazir, while the previous year, during the Great War, we had met to commemorate the British conquest of German West Africa. At one of these feasts our host was a Mussulman, who partook with us; so also a small son of his endeavoured to do, but there were many courses, and the day had already been so long and exciting, that the little fellow could not manage to keep awake. He would sit up for one or two courses, then, having fallen asleep, be removed to return after one or two more, and so food and sleep alternated with him throughout the meal. The elaborate menu of these meals is usually presided over by a Ladaki quite expert in Western cooking. After a short smoke we all return to the covered balcony, to find a large bonfire kindled on the open space in front of us, on which kerosene oil, so costly by the time it reaches Leh, is recklessly thrown at intervals, or when a special flare of illumination is required. The weird performances we are going to see are rendered far more effective by its flickering light, which also plays on the quaint brown faces of the spectators, packed closely together on the other three sides of the square, some sitting on the ground in front, others standing behind, women in blue turquoised *perags* and black

earflaps, men and children in their turned-up caps, dotted about with Mussulmans in turbans, old and young all eager and expectant, for they love a *ltadmo*.

One of our annual friends opens the programme, a man on stilts concealed by long draperies, not very realistic, but a source of great delight to the child-like audience. He is followed by two large birds, with long necks (held up by an arm of the masquerader within) and vulture-like heads and beaks, the bodies covered with sheepskins. These extraordinary animals, programmed as "chicken," hop about, peck at each other, clean their feathers, and attend to their personal *shikar*, each action provoking a fresh outburst of amusement from the crowd.

Next comes a lion dance, in which two men are covered with a large skin, from which their human booted legs protrude as fore and hind legs in the most unabashed fashion. The face consists of a mask, and its attendants introduce it with antics of their own. The unwieldly lion makes grotesque leaps and bounds, and finally climbs up on to a table. The play was brought to Leh from Chinese Turkestan, where several tables are piled up high, and our nimble lion reaches the topmost. In Leh, however, a far more serious *dénouement* is achieved, for, with a series of rolls and contortions, a baby lion is born, to the unbounded delight of the audience, and suddenly appears on the table with its mother (the cub being a child also dressed in a skin). Waddell says that the play of this acrobatic lion was primarily derived from China, and has its origin in the "mythical lion of the Himalayan snows, which is believed to confer fortune on the country where it resides. One of these lions was enticed to China by a wizard, and the crops and cattle prospered as long as it lived, and when it died the Chinese stripped off its skin with which they conduct this dance."

Next comes a dragon dance, also originating from China, where the dragon is deified. It is supposed to follow after a

man holding a ruby, which it wishes to devour. It is formed by a masked leader, from whom long coloured strips of thin cloth pass backwards over other men, who hold up lighted Chinese lanterns on sticks inside it, all their feet representing the dragon's legs. It certainly looks fantastic enough, with its illuminated sinuous snake-like outline darting to and fro in the darkness.

These plays are varied with dances, such as a torch dance, of Indian origin, in which a bare-footed man rushes about twirling a long torch lighted at each end, getting more and more furious as the burning ends approach his body, and the drums beat faster. Of sword dances there are two or three varieties; a slow quiet rhythmical one by a Balti with one sword only; one by a Pathan, lithe and rapid, with a sword in each hand; another slower one, when a Ladaki wields two swords, while in a fourth, two Pathan dancers, each with sword and shield, approach from opposite corners, and engage in mock fight. This dance has come down from old Ladaki times, when our peaceful Tibetans here more resembled their Pathan neighbours, and were probably more fierce and warlike in their mountain fastnesses.

Another amusing scene which is usually played on these occasions is the representation of a Kashmiri pundit, who is a settlement officer, and goes round the countryside measuring fields and assessing taxes. He and his underlings are caricatured with floured faces, and good humoured fun made of their bribing methods.

But, perhaps the masterpiece and certainly the most amusing item of the show comes on towards the end, called "The Amban and the Boat." The Amban is a Chinese official on tour, who enters the scene of operations with his staff, and engages in his judicial duties. Then a messenger arrives and presents him with a red paper, informing him that his wife is coming to meet him. The lady is seen in the distance advancing towards her lord in a rickety boat over a rough

sea. The boat is cleverly made with a framework of wood and paper from which a cloth valance depends. In the middle a small curtained canopy is erected, through which the lady's head can be dimly discerned, but her manly legs can be seen beneath as her impersonator works the boat, walking sideways here and there, and making the light craft rock and sway and gyrate violently as though in a heavy sea. An attendant guide or guardian and a boatman with an oar both accompany the lady, but outside the boat, so that the manipulations of the external oar add to the ludicrous effect produced, which in the bonfire light is grotesquely realistic and extraordinarily funny. As the boat approaches the Amban, the boatman makes a grave error in his nautical activities, and the boat with its precious occupant totters dizzily down to stillness. However it is not sunk to the depths of the ocean, for, after the Amban has manifested his anger and the boatman received a beating, the gay craft rises and once more rocks and sways, and, encountering boisterous seas, again vanishes into the distance, leaving the European element of the audience at least struggling between laughter and memories of *mal-de-mer*.

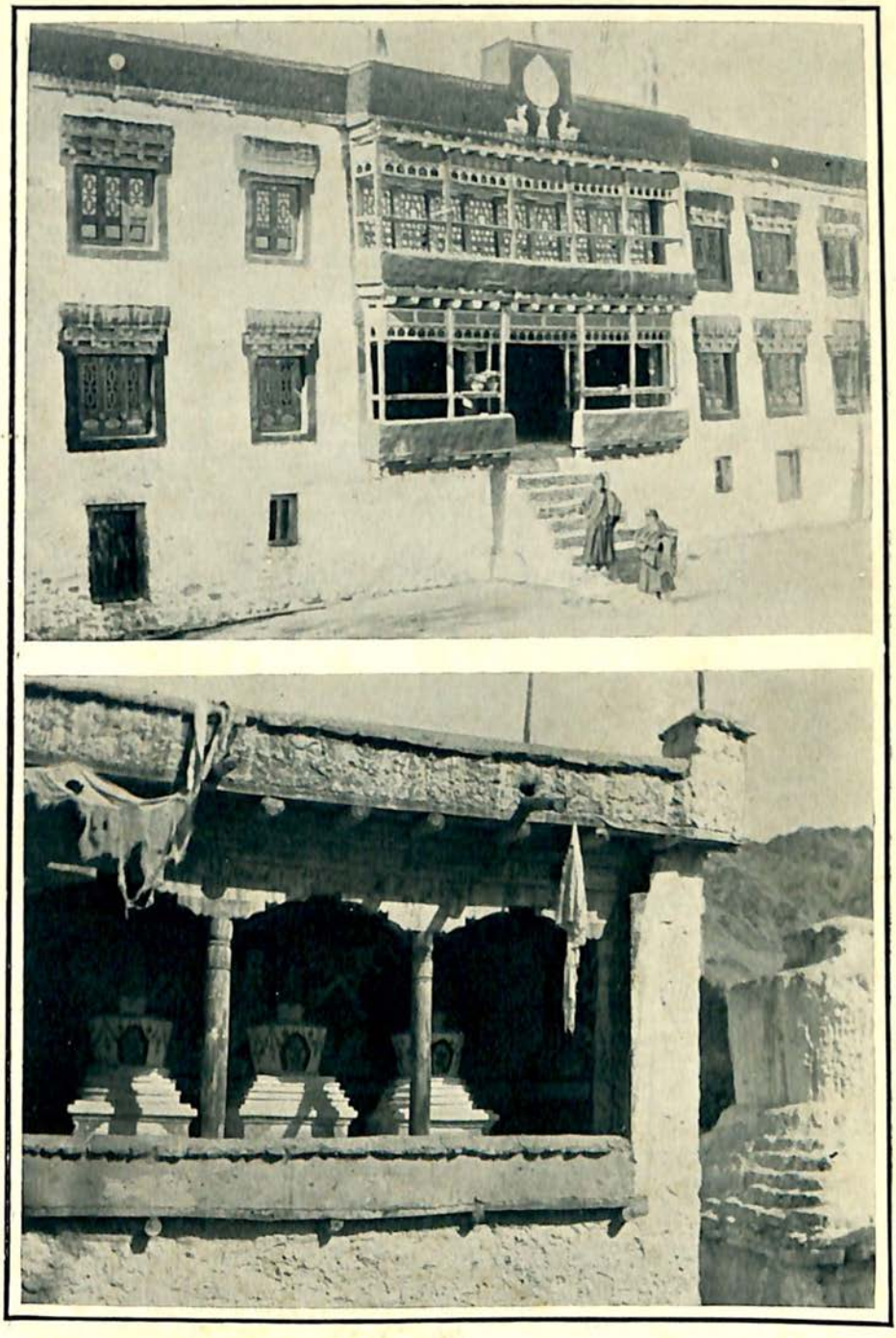
This little drama and that of the lion and dragon were brought to Leh by traders and servants of sahibs who travelled to Yarkand. "The Amban and the Boat" so impressed one of the latter when he saw it at Kashgar, that he introduced it into Leh for the first time as a fit entertainment for the wedding festivities of a friend, who, we hope, did not have to send for his bride across such perilous seas.

CHAPTER XXI

A Typical Monastery

THIS is a country of monasteries, hardly a village is without one. In some it is imposing and situated on as high an eminence as can be found conveniently near the village. In others it is just a better class ordinary house with one or two lamas. Some monasteries belong to the Red sect, others to the Yellow. In some there is a resident Incarnation and others are only visited by one occasionally. It would be tedious to both reader and writer, to describe all these, so we will confine our attentions to one of the most pleasing and certainly one of the cleanest of monasteries which lies close to Leh, and may be reached by a twenty minutes' walk up through the fields behind the rest-house. A small village and a group of poplar trees, much above the average size, indicate the direction from afar, also the glint of the gilded wild goats represented just below the roof of the monastery can be descried from some distance. Having sent a message beforehand to the *sLob-dpon* (pronounced "Lobon") or head lama in charge, we meet for an early tea, and wend our way up along the stony paths by the side of the watercourse, skirting the corn-fields, so as to be able to use our cameras while the light is still good. This little monastery of Sankar is closely allied to the Yellow Cap one at Spitug, about five miles away, and is presided over by the same *Skushog* now incarnate in the small boy of whom we shall speak later.

But during his minority the real presiding genius is Meme



SANKAR DGONPA.

A small yellow-sect monastery close to Leh, shewing the main entrance.

A SHRINE.

The three *chortens* inside are usually coloured red, white and blue; and on the walls behind them various gods are depicted in bright colours.

Lobzang, a delightful old gentleman with a benevolent face and a courteous manner, which are really quite charming. He is quite a good photographer, and this common hobby forms a natural link of friendship, including requests for the purchase of self-toning paper and other photographic requisites. He is expecting us, and stands in the side of the doorway with some of his lamas so that we may advance without fear of the monastery dogs, of which there are always some about, who generally announce the arrival of an intruder with considerable and alarming vigour. The main doorway is lofty and deep, with heavy wooden doors, but to-day it is closed, as inside carpenters are sitting under its shade sawing away for some builders, busy at a new balcony in a near corner of the building. The side door, a smaller one, is that generally in use, and admits to the corner of the large court-yard, in the middle of which are two walled enclosures round wild rose bushes, one a large yellow one, the other pink, with another bush whose pale yellow flowers, insignificant in themselves, have the strong scent of syringa, in bloom. In the centre there stands a high poplar wood pole, to the top of which is attached a black yak's tail, and running down its entire length a prayer-flag. To one side of the enclosure is a mounting block from which the *Skushog* can mount his steed.

Lying about the court-yard are a few dogs, but they seem quite peaceful and undisturbed by our advent. The main temple faces us as we enter, three storeys high, with the usual roof-edge of a layer of sticks about one foot broad, lying end-on, and painted with ochre. On this roof are erected at intervals long rough poles bearing prayer-flags, or yak's tails, or an umbrella-shaped structure consisting of long streamers of plaited yak's wool bound together by coarse strips of raw silk and surmounted by a trident. The windows, latticed-shaped but unglazed, are interlaced with wood, picked out in various colours, and, across the top of each, is a little valance, a frill of some coarse white cloth with a red

striped border The other three sides of the court-yard are filled in with the two storeyed private dwellings of the lamas. No pillared cloisters are these, but just an occasional flight of a few steps, then a door, and at the side a window at a level which may or may not be in relation with that of the other doors and windows, and over both apertures the same kind of valance. If the latter sags in the middle, there is no hurry to replace it, far less to wash it, but on the whole this *dGonpa*, presents quite a clean, brushed, cared-for, tidy appearance. Ascending the steps, we arrive in the large covered portico outside the main room or refectory of the monastery. All round the three walls pictures are painted in bright colours. On the left is the " Wheel of Life " held by a dragon-like monster. This consists of an inner, a middle, and an outer circle the middle one being divided into six compartments. The inner circle represents by means of a dove, a serpent and a pig coloured respectively red, green and black the three vices, lust, ill-will and stupidity, which bind man to the wheel of existence. In the upper compartment of the middle circle are the gods, into this grows the tree whose fruit provides any food desired by the soul and whose roots lie in the world of the demi-gods, who continually wage war against the gods in order to obtain this fruit. In the upper left-hand compartment are men. The above three existences are superior, whilst below the equator are the inferior ones of beasts, then of *yidags*, poor miserable men with large bellies, but such small necks that their hunger can never be appeased through such constricted throats, and in the lowest section are the hells, both hot and cold. A cold hell seems rather a misnomer to English ears, but Ladakis, at any rate, know the terrors of extreme cold. Buddha himself is out of the circle, and yet his reflexes seem somehow to be still in the wheel of existence. In the outer circle are pictures illustrating various phases of life, such as birth, marriage, death, burial work.

Opposite the top of the steps, on each side of the door with

its fine brass bosses, are the gods of the four points of the compass, whose duty it is to guard the temple, and these figures are depicted outside most temples. On the right wall of the portico is a benign old gentleman, the god of luck, who sits under a tree bright with blossom, and holds converse with sundry animals, such as a stag, an elephant, and a peacock. We take a deep breath of fresh air before entering the refectory with its dim atmosphere of musty incense, lighted from above through a central aperture leading to an inner roof, and from the door behind us, and slowly descry its contents between the dark wooden pillars and the faded hanging banners. Opposite to us the *Skushog's* throne is raised above the other seats, upholstered with rather dingy cushions on which he, of course, sits cross-legged, so there is no need for a place for the lower limbs to hang over, but immediately in front of it is a narrow ledge-like table on which are the tools of his office: the bell, the thunderbolt or *dorjhe*, a small tambourine, with a very restricted waist and a long tasselled appendage, as well as the knob on a string which beats on the skins when rattled. Other utensils consist of temple vessels for pouring out water, beer, tea and other libations. Leading up to the throne, on each side of the central aisle, are the seats of the lamas slightly raised above the ground, well-padded and covered with rugs, and in front of them a continuous shelf-like table. A cup or two may be seen left from the last meal; here, in the corner between seat and table, rests a leather bag, and on a plate some butter and tea. A lama tells us the tea has been given out of the bag and placed with the butter ready for the morning meal, which they take, he says, about 9 a.m., though they get up at sunrise.

Near this physical sustenance, on the lamas' seats are a collection of brass bowls leaning against one another upside down, as though to drip after washing. These are, for the oil and wicks to be placed before the altar. The seat of the *Slobdpon* is at the head of the monks' pew on the right of the

Skushog. Next to the *Slobdpon* sits the leader of the ecclesiastical band. Heading the opposite row is the *Umdzad*, who is the steward and is responsible for the worldly affairs of the monastery, and in some *dGonpa* at the further end, near the door and on the *Skushog's* left, a seat is reserved for a disciplinarian who has to keep the lamas in order should any misbehave.

Thus they sit, whether they are at meals or engaged in their devotions. The latter consists of the reading of the books, punctuated every now and again by the band, when the flageolets are blown and the drums are boomed. Behind the row of seats one's eyes, now accustomed to the dimness, are able to make out the walls, painted with pictures of all sorts of gods and creatures, human, animal and mixed. Here is one specimen of dragon-like fury, crushing all sorts of wretched creatures under his feet, no doubt for punitive purposes, and, let us hope, remedial ones. Another wall will show Buddha-like figures in peaceful contemplation, and with hands and fingers placed in various postures, each of which has its own special signification. In other places are wooden shelves and recesses of various sizes, once gaily painted round the edges, though the light is too obscure to appreciate it, now blackened by age and smoke. In these sit more images of gods, mostly of a beneficent type, but the chief ones will be found behind the *Skushog's* throne. In a corner will be seen immense pots used for water or beer, a most fascinating assembly with their long-nosed spouts drawn straight out from the brims, high pointed collars behind, shining copper sides with brass edgings and waist-bands, the latter sometimes chased in silver. In another corner will be dusty shelves containing the holy books, manuscripts written on parchment and tied between covers about twelve to eighteen inches long and some four to six inches high. So holy are these that when they are being carried along the streets, the good Buddhist uncovers and touches them with his head. They also are

often shaded by an umbrella, and at times of drought are taken out for a walk under this to invite the rain.

Passing behind the *Skushog's* seat we come to a better lighted room with more idols all around in their recesses, giving one the impression of an exhibition of different sized dolls houses, in fact our guides take us through a succession of such rooms, all much resembling one another, but each with its own purpose. Thus, in the first of these, is the temple of the god called Avolakita with his eleven heads, surmounted by the head of Amitabha, the Buddha of Boundless Light. Round the whole, looking rather like a halo, are 1000 hands, each one of which has in its palm an eye. In order to accommodate his many heads an attic projects up into an inner courtyard of the upper storey. The living representative of this god, the All-merciful One is the Dalai Lama, and the story is rather a pleasing one. Avolakita was about to enter Nirvana, when he happened to look back and notice some poor creature in trouble. Requesting his father, Amitabha, for permission to return and help him, he received this reply, "Yes, go back, but when you get there, you will find that there are many others in trouble. In order to see them all, I give you a thousand eyes, and in order to save them all a thousand hands." This surely savours more of the true Buddhism than the everlasting desire to do actions which shall obtain merit. A friend of ours has pointed out that these heads represent four past races, and that actually there should be twelve heads, three to each race, but the men of Atlantis were so bad that one of their three has been omitted. In front of this image stands a large ewer on a pedestal, which should be filled with butter and in which a burning wick should be floating, but we must admit that on the occasion of our visit, at any rate, it was "the light that failed." We pass into another room containing other images, and whose walls are hung round with many *thangkas*. These are holy banners of various sizes, the smallest about one by two feet, hanging from a stick on which

they can be rolled up, and covered by very thin silk, from the top of which two or three broad ribbons depend. These depict gods or goddesses or the "Wheel of Life," and with their colours mellowed by age are sometimes very beautiful and of real value. From here we pass into another fairly large and well-lighted room with frescoes and holy banners on its walls. This is much used during the first month of the Buddhist year, when special ceremonies, already described, are performed.

We go up some rough, ladder-like stairs into the room where the *Skushog* usually sits, his place being marked by cushions and a padded back of gothic shape, and with a row of little Tibetan tables and mats at right-angles, where his attendant lamas sit with him. Near his seat, hanging up on a nail in the pillar, are seen some of his ceremonial hats; thus for riding he has a round most uncomfortable *papier maché* structure, with crown far too small for anyone's head, a fair-sized brim, and a dome with a knob on the top, the prevailing colours being red on an orange background. Even with its strap under the chin, it is difficult to see what possible purchase so small a crown could have on any head in the slightest wind. At its side, a tea cosy-like head-dress, peaking over to one side in dark plum-coloured silk with gold patterns on it, is the one he is said to wear in the mornings and at certain annual festivals. Occasionally a devil-mask is seen hanging up, and in this particular monastery, no doubt reflecting Lobzang's hobby, are occasional cheaply-framed photographs of the Dalai Lama or of other lesser dignitaries.

And there is still another room in which there is a large god of the name of "Dukar." He is of such a size that his head projects into a second storey reaching into a little verandah on the roof; the general arrangement is much like that of Avalokita, but his is a malevolent nature, in proof of which one sees the sickles, knives and arrows in his 1000 hands. Under his 1000 feet are many poor creatures, both animal

and man, and he possesses 1000 heads. Thrown at his feet one notices many cowrie shells and Indian copper coins, the former brought by women to appease him. This image was only made a few years ago, and a special series of services were held to induce the god to enter the image. These ceremonies were accompanied by feasting and dancing in the grove of large trees at the side of the monastery, while the actual ritual was performed on the roof, where Meme Lobzang (the *Skushog* being then a tiny baby) presided, assisted by a group of lamas, who helped him to pour the right libations and offerings from the many vessels and bowls before his throne into the large fire which leaped and crackled before him, accompanied by monotonous incantations and chants from a group of seated lamas, and, of course, the monastic band. To this roof we now duly ascended up another very steep ladder, where Meme Lobzang himself extended his hand to help the ladies with true Western gallantry. The view was magnificent, both behind towards the Kardong Pass and before down to Leh, whose trees blotted out the desert below, so that the cultivation and all its little square terraced fields might have extended to the foot of the mighty mountains on the further side of the Indus, all touched with the magic softness of the westering sun.

Retracing our steps down the steep staircases, through the dim passages and rooms, we emerged again into the portico, and viewed the lamas private dwellings ranged on the three sides in front of us as we descended the temple steps. In the left-hand corner was a peculiarly fantastic bit, so delightfully crazy it looked. A short flight of steps led up to two doors, each with an ancient padded curtain to keep out the draught, and a sagging valance above, whilst over one was a quaint little attic with a window of roughly-patterned lattice, its lines so fascinatingly crooked, and enhanced by a small awning, projecting from one side of the attic to shade the roof, on the edge of which was a series of rough window boxes,

where American marigolds sometimes blossom. Once, to finish the picture, we glimpsed a bent little old lama who peeped out of the attic and over the window boxes, and saw for a moment the elfin grey locks and untidy whiskers of his hatless old monkish face, the fittest possible inhabitant of that grotesque little corner.

There was one more interesting little visit to be paid. Meme Lobzang actually consented to show us his own private compartments. There were eight of us, and the lamas had some whispered consultation as to whether we should all get in. Across the court-yard and up some steps to the right of the main entrance, under the valanced doorway, through a small vestibule in which we noticed a fascinating copper water pot, we entered a tiny room looking down towards Leh. We could just manage to sit down on the floor, the interested lamas peering in and watching our every movement with amused curiosity. The floor was covered with small mats over felt ones. The *Slobdpon's* chief resting place and probably his bed, was rather more padded, and covered with an orange felt. He sat with his back to the small latticed window, a low tiny table in front, and at his side a higher one on which were sundry portraits, one of their Majesties, the King and Queen, one of the Dalai Lama, and one of the *Skushog* of Hemis in his festival dancing dress with high hat and overskirt of human bones, taken by the Doctor Sahib. A pickle bottle held a bunch of green from the shrub in the court-yard, and at the side was a low open bowl of rose petals. A small god like a doll, and a pot of charming design, the latter unfortunately dressed in lady-like petticoats, were also noticed, besides a printing frame, and another tiny god of doll's house size. Behind him on the windowsill sundry writing materials, religious books, and small ceremonial utensils lay about, a coloured portrait of the late King Edward hung on another wall; in fact every corner of the room was used, yet the effect was clean and tidy. Stuffy it could not help being with so many visitors, and, after taking

a dried apricot each (to dispose of later on by some other means than the mouth), from a plateful which he presented to us, we rose to go. On the way out he invited us to see his kitchen, another tiny, but tidy little apartment, with its cooking vessels clean and neatly arranged, and its low roof shiny with the polish of years of smoke. These rooms had not been tidied up for our reception, yet they completed the pleasant impression of order and cleanliness he had already given us, and it was with a real respect for the benevolent old gentleman that we bade him adieu, and passed down by the iris-bordered corn-fields in the soft evening light to our homes.

CHAPTER XXII

Skushogs & Scandals

AMONG the greater personages who periodically appear on the stage of public life in Leh are the *Skushogs* of the surrounding monasteries. The word Sku-shog, meaning literally "body-great," or translated freely, "your presence," is a title of honour used by Central Tibetans for any person of rank, including even the European occasionally, but in Western Tibet it is confined to clerical dignitaries, and, in practice, is only used to designate the head abbot of one or more monasteries. Such a man is regarded as having obtained sufficient holiness to reach Nirvana, but in his compassion for his fellows he voluntarily remains in the wheel of life, and comes back to help them by presiding over their *dGonpa*. Thus as soon as the head incarnation of a monastery dies, he is re-incarnated in a male baby born at the time of his death, this child then has to be discovered and brought to rule over his own lamasery when old enough. Here he is absolute monarch; he himself cannot do evil whatever sin he commits; he is a law-giver, but need not abide by the laws he lays down. The method of discovery and preparatory education of a *Skushog* may be best told by translating a short biography written in Tibetan by the *Skushog* of Hemis at our request.

"My own home is not in Llasa itself, as my father was an assistant to the Yutog minister, whose house is connected with Lhasa by a bridge, covered by a roof set in turquoise-coloured baked bricks. My house-name is 'Yutog Shar.'

The Yutog minister is the governor of twelve provinces and lives in the Kensdongrdzong.

" I was born when my father was in the employ of the Yutogpa. My birthday is in the fifteenth Rabjhung, in the year of the Sheep. According to the English calendar, this would be the year 1883 A.D. When I was eight years old, that is in the end of the year of the Iron Tiger, the steward of the Hemis monastery, whose name was Ngagwang Chos Zang, and the Kashmir State sent to Llasa for me, where I was staying at Dechen Choskor, which means the Holy Wheel. That I was their *Skushog* was conclusively proved to the envoys, for when they asked the Yongdzin Incarnation to tell them where they could find their new incarnation, he told them my house-name, my father's name and the name of my birth-year quite distinctly and correctly, although it was impossible for him to have known anything about me. Having arrived at Lhaldang, they acquainted me with this prophecy. This was in the ninth year of the Iron Rabbit. After doing obeisance to the Dalai Lama with the *Lobchag* [this is the merchant who is sent from Ladak every two years by the Kashmir State to salute the Dalai Lama and to hand him a present of Rs.9,000]. I offered my first hair to the Yongdzin, who was my Arch-*Skushog* at Dechen Choskor, and was then decorated with the crown-name Ngag Wang Jhamspel Gelegs Rgyaltsan Lhundrup Chogslas Rnampar Rgyalwai Lde, after which I started on my journey ; at Shigatse I went to meet Panchen Ertini (the Trashi Lama, who is next in rank to the Dalai Lama), and after this arrived safely and happily at my destination in Hemis. The next year my enthronement as the successor of former *Skushogs* took place, after which I returned to Lhasa, going on to Sangsngag where the Arch-*Skushog* lives, and where I met the head of the Red Sect Lamas, the Drugpa Rinpoche and the Yongdzin Rinpoche, and where I learnt the

doctrinal truths, staying for some months. After this I stayed in Gongkar Dechos until the Sheep year, and in the year of the Firemonkey I went to see the Galwa Rinpoche, that is the Dalai Lama. Having done obeisance to him, he conferred on me the rank of 'San-o-han-too,' which is a Mongolian word, and other honours which are only bestowed on men of high rank. [To show this rank he has an umbrella carried before him, and possesses his own flag.] I was also placed over other *Skushogs* and professors. I thus received such kindness and praise from the Dalai Lama. That year I returned to Ladak, and the next I passed my examination in doctrine. After this I went to the hermitage of Godtsang, where I lived as a hermit, meditated on the doctrines of Saskya Rnyingma and Drugpa, etc., and read the Kangyur and the scriptures of the Lord Buddha, and pondered their meaning. Here I remained for ten years, but in the Firemonkey year I came out of retirement, and from that time onwards I have been travelling about Upper and Lower Ladak and Kulu, visiting my congregations and giving money to a few lamas, and occasionally I stay in a hermitage."

Since he wrote this little history he has also made a grand tour through India, Ceylon and Burmah to Lhasa, and has thus seen something of the impact of Western civilization, which interests him greatly. He has always been much attracted by small mechanical toys and Western devices, such as electric torches, clocks, watches, microscopes, etc., and is himself an expert photographer. Some visitors to Hemis were once amused to see on each side of the chief altar in his private apartment a pair of Odol bottles, their bent necks facing each other. When we first visited this room, they were replaced by Southwell jam jars containing artificial flowers. He is interested in Western medical science too, and gave a sum of money to the Doctor Sahib towards getting the operation theatre of the Moravian Mission Hospital in

order, so that he might thereby "help blind Buddhists to get their sight." Hence the board outside, declaring it to be "the Raspa Operating Theatre." He himself once came for a temporary stopping to be put into two of his teeth, one of which still remains after seven years. During his time of retirement up the hillside, he also read through our Christian New Testament, as translated into Tibetan, and when he first visited our house, his attention was attracted by a picture of the Last Supper, and he at once asked which was the Apostle John. He can write a good hand in English, and we believe understands far more of the spoken language than he allows to appear. He is the special abbot of the royal family of Leh, and whenever he comes from his monastery, some twenty-three miles away, to make a short stay in his town house at Leh, lamas appear on the roof of the castle to salute him with their long shawms and flageolets. Throughout the whole of his stay, salutations are played in the evening after sunset, when the long boom of the large instruments and the plaintive tones of the smaller ones are particularly pleasing, as they steal through the quiet after the close of day, and also during the early hours of the morning. For this latter réveillé I fear the lamas have no clock, for in summer it seems to take place at any time between two and five a.m., sometimes long before sunrise.

Approaching Leh from the direction of Hemis, a hill suddenly rears itself in the middle of the valley, surmounting which is a monastery, that of Stagna. The head lama of this monastery we first saw at the Hemis festival in 1925; he was then a little boy of six, and we shall refer to him later in the description of that event. He belongs to a special sect, whose name denotes their pale yellow caps, and who are mostly congregated in Spitti.

On another commanding position, and seen from as far up the Indus valley almost as Stagna, is the *dGonpa* of Trigtse, perched on the top of a hill, which marks the end of a spur of

mountains, jutting out of a long range to the north of the valley. This is a Yellow-Cap monastery and therefore gives a cleaner impression than most of the red ones. Its present re-incarnation was the hero of a strange series of events during the time we lived in Leh.

It must have been in 1914 that we first made his acquaintance. We heard that the Trigtse *dGonpa* had been without a *Skushog* for years, but at last a deputation of lamas had visited Tibet, and declared that they must bring their *Skushog* back to take up his rule. The boy, who was then about nineteen, refused to come, and his father strongly advised the lamas not to take him, declaring they would only rue it. He was a head-strong youth with no ecclesiastical leanings at all, and had already, we were told, fought on the side of China against his own country. The lamas insisted however, and he was brought to Ladak and installed at Trigtse. He seems to have been anxious to make the acquaintance of the white man, and, thinking he must do in Rome as Rome does, he sent an envoy from Trigtse to Leh to seek out the correct clothing for his first call on the Sahibs. This man, having searched the bazar in vain, called at the Hospital and asked the Doctor Sahib where he could buy a solar topee. Now the doctor and his bride, when they first came to India, had been advised by ill-informed friends to be sure to purchase these topees at Trieste, their port of sail from Europe. Here, therefore, they invested in what proved to be most inappropriate policemen-like helmets, and a kindly sister in India at once saw to it that the Memsahib's was replaced by a more suitable one. Bringing the ugly old helmet to Leh, in case the better one broke, she little thought how august a wearer it would find, for the Doctor Sahib with sudden inspiration sent the man over to his house, where his wife unearthed the discarded topee for the servant to take to his master. She added a pair of speckled socks of her husband's of which she disapproved, an armful of picture papers, and

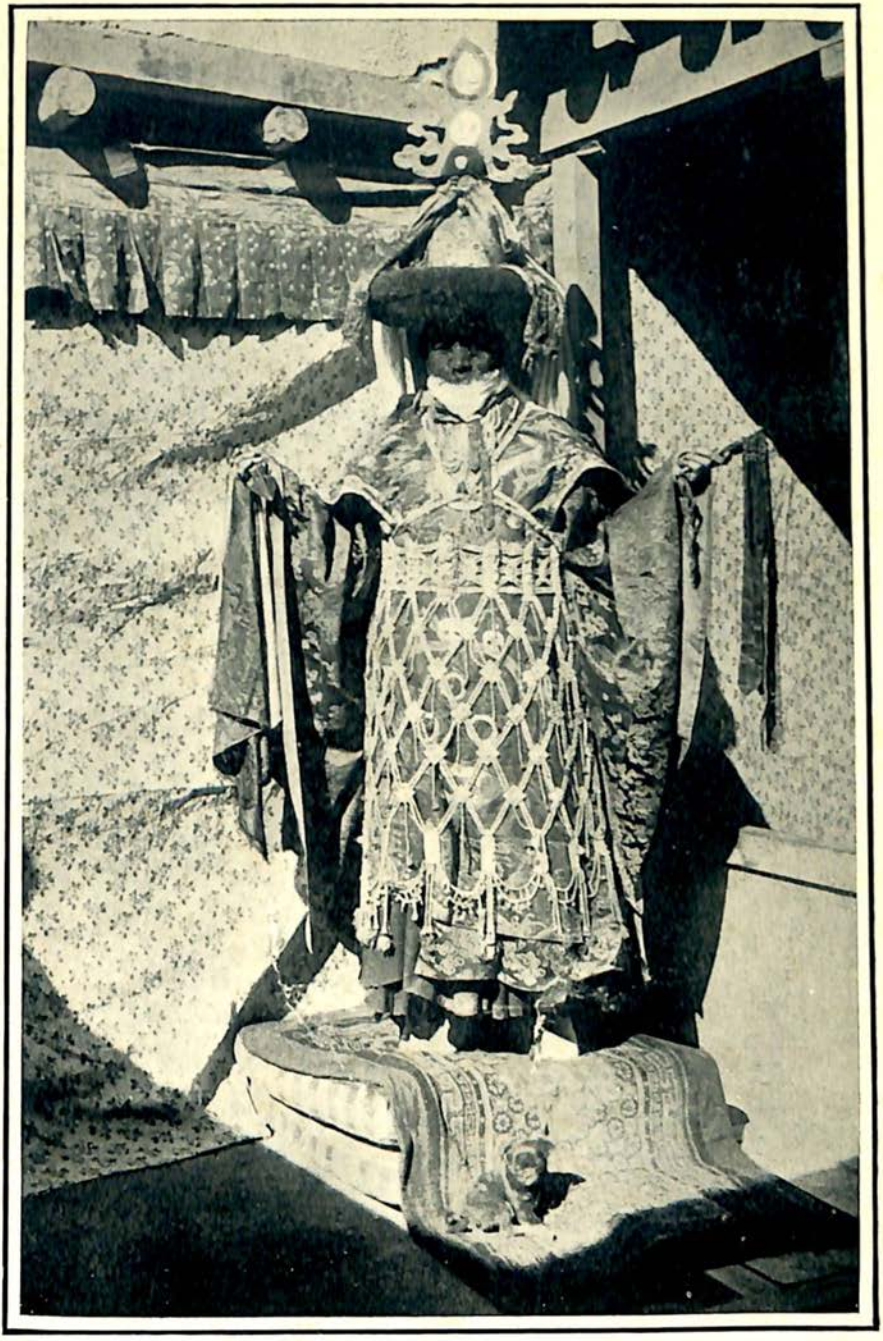
some vegetables from the garden, and the man went off in high glee at the success of his expedition.

The next morning we were asked whether the *Skushog* of Trigtse might call upon us. We hastily arranged for an interpreter, for our Superintendent was away, and we were all new to the country; moreover, our guest's language of Central Tibet was quite a different dialect from that of Ladak. He duly arrived, dressed in his official robes and attended by two or three lamas, and was invited into the drawing-room. But he lingered in the hall, and to the Doctor's surprise began to undress. This process continued to such an alarming extent that he was led into the study. Two other ladies had just called to go out with the Memsahib, and great was the surprise of all three when the drawing-room door opened, and the *Skushog* entered. He wore the helmet-like topee, a Chinese type of frock-coat with paired pin-tucks across the back, brown trousers, a pair of bright yellowish socks, and some Chinese-looking attempts at European shoes. Invited to a chair, and the interpreter called, he entered into friendly talk. He announced among other things that he would like to become a Christian, but we did not take this seriously, and pointed out that he could not do that and retain his wealth and power as a *Skushog*. He then intimated that he would like to stay the night, a rather awkward proposition with our limited accommodation, but we said we could give him the verandah. His lamas whispered anxiously together and let him know it was time to go. Meanwhile they had boiled some tea for him on a little fire outside our kitchen in his own pots, as he must not take food of our cooking. After this the Doctor offered him a cigarette, not knowing in his ignorance of the country that it was against the rules. The *Skushog* made violent signs to him to withdraw into the study again, where, away from the eyes of the lamas, he enjoyed his smoke thoroughly. The latter were at last able to get him to go, and withdrew him on to the verandah where he changed

back into his priestly vestures, which, needless to say, suited him far better. Before he finally retired to change into them, he straightened himself and squared his shoulders, in order to show us that he also possessed a waistcoat ; but, alas ! between the bottom of that garment and the top of his trousers was a hiatus in which his holy brown body was disclosed. Short of stature, with a strong convergent squint, and scarred by small-pox, indisputable signs of his being the true re-incarnation of his predecessors, for he was sure that he himself had never had small-pox since this re-birth, the foreign clothes hardly showed him off to advantage. The next occasion on which he visited us he retained his *Skushog's* garb and had a photograph taken of himself and his suite, the incongruous element being that his most intimate servant was not a lama, but a Mussulman with short hair and a Tibetan cap with four fur-lined flaps.

After his first call, we took the opportunity of a day's holiday to ride over to Trigtse and visit him. We found him encamped in a *bagh* below and about a mile away from the monastery, in a gorgeous tent with nice camp furniture. We ourselves had brought a picnic lunch, at which he elected to join us. The Memsahib was much amused to find that for her first attempt at meat patties, she had put sugar into the pastry instead of salt, but the *Skushog* seemed to find this quite to his taste, and enjoyed them immensely. Afterwards we all repaired to the monastery, riding our ponies up the steep ascent, and he showed us over it, including all his own private apartments.

But things soon began to go wrong and all sorts of rumours reached Leh. The *Skushog* declared in public that he did not believe in his own office or his religion. When the common people knelt as he rode past, instead of placing his hand on their heads in benediction, he boxed their ears. He had no reverence for the holy property of the monastery, but sold many of its treasures to any good bidder ; he also had the



THE SKUSHOG (ABBOT) OF HEMIS DGONPA

In the robes in which he led off the first dance at the Festival of 1916. The overskirt is made of human bones, and in his right hand he holds a dagger. The cloth across his mouth is to keep out the dust raised by the dancing.

idols out in a row to use as targets for a shooting practice. His colleague at Hemis sent him a letter, and this he returned with a donkey drawn across the bottom as his pertinent and only reply.

One day matters came to a crisis : his lamas gave him a severe beating and shut him up in solitary confinement. Yet by every token he was their *Skushog*, and one of them seems to have relented and released him. The two came to Leh, where the *Skushog* first went to the State Hospital to have his external wounds attended to by the Indian Sub-Assistant Surgeon, but his internal treatment he could only trust to the English doctor, so for that he came to the Mission Hospital, where he also received a lesson on Western professional etiquette. The monasterial difficulties resulted in a court case, following which certain of his lamas were sent to prison in Leh, which hardly bettered the relations between them and their spiritual head.

It was not now practicable for him to return to Trigtse, and the question arose as to what was to be done with him, for still he was their *Skushog* and entitled to the financial benefits of his office. The matter came up before the British Joint Commissioner, the Wazir or State Joint Commissioner, and eventually was taken to H.H. the Maharajah of Kashmir. The result of it all was that in 1916 he went down to India, and for two or three years vanished into oblivion. Early in 1920 he again appeared in Ladak with one lama servant, giving strange accounts of his experiences in India. He said that he had served as a common sepoy in Baluchistan, alleged that in some capacity he had been as far as Basra, that he had acted as bearer to an English officer with alcoholic tendencies, and also that he had been connected with a Colonel Sahib in the neighbourhood of Madras, who had treated him as his own son, and of whom he always spoke with sincere and friendly gratitude. He still maintained his utter disbelief in the religion of his fathers. The people

called him " the Mad Skushog," but, said he, " I am not mad, I don't believe in it at all." The problem of his sustenance and the dues of the monastery remained, for still no one else could be their *Skushog* during his lifetime, yet he entirely repudiated his office. The Mussulmans in Leh pressed him to join their ranks, offering monetary advantages, and the Buddhists were naturally very upset when he asserted that the only religion which appealed to him was Christianity, and vowed he would embrace it. He came to the Moravian missionaries and asked them to accept him. It was a difficult situation, as his sincerity, especially after his wild dissipated life, needed proof, but at last they began to give him instruction, telling him that study and probation were necessary first. He came regularly to read with one of the missionaries, who found him a most interesting and quite intelligent pupil, to whom some of the things which puzzle Occidental minds were perfectly easy, while other fundamental ideas, which our minds can accept unhesitatingly, he as frankly avowed he could not believe.

At about this time, living as he was with his one lama servant in the town, and visiting Mussulman and Buddhist homes alike, he began to be alarmed for his personal safety. After taking an evening meal out, both he and his servant were ill, and he suspected poisoning. He came to the missionaries and begged them to take him into their compound, where he knew he would be safe. After some consideration, he was given accommodation, and it was a strange thing to look up the compound in the morning and see the *Skushog* sitting on his steps in the sunshine, studying the Bible. We still suspected that the desire to join the Christian religion was secondary, and this suspicion grew when it was found that he had hoped to get a political post under the British Government, and so go back to Tibet under its protection. Without it he certainly dare not venture, for he feared the Tibetans would dispose of both him and his father, by tying them up

in yak's skins and casting them out in the desert to be shrivelled to death. A Bishop was coming to visit the Mission, and the British Joint Commissioner would soon be coming up for the summer months, so he waited with us for both, though meanwhile he went away for two or three weeks to fetch some of his property from Zankskar. He took his lama servant with him, and, before starting, secured what he considered was an outfit of European clothes. When remonstrated with, he replied that he had thought over the matter carefully, and wished to show that he had made a clean cut with the old life. On his way down we heard that he stuck to his profession of Christianity, asked a blessing before his meals, read his New Testament aloud, and, when the usual offerings were brought to him by ardent Buddhists,—for still he was a *Skushog*,—only took them under protest, saying that he himself had no blessing to give. Arrived at Zankskar he obtained his pony and goods, but his lama deserted him, in fact he seemed to have had a rough time, and he came back alone. Strange it was to think of this high-born ecclesiastical dignitary travelling in the Orient with no servant, though doubtless credulous Buddhists were still eager to obtain merit by providing for his wants at each stage. A short waiting time remained, during which he often came to meals with us, rode and talked with us, proving an entertaining companion and a gentlemanly guest. He also continued his instruction and attended church services regularly, sitting on the floor with the other members, and entering into the responses and hymns with apparent sincerity and enjoyment.

Finally, through the British Joint Commissioner, he was given a post in the Secret Service at Gyangtse, just across the Tibetan border on the Darjeeling side, and left Leh with letters of reference and recommendation, vowing that in two years he would come back to complete his instruction in the Christian faith.

So this strange youth vanished from our midst. We

learned afterwards that with the Maharajah's sanction, he obtained Rs500 from the Trigtse *dGonpa* to help him to get home, though the lamas would commit themselves to no statement as to whether they still regarded him as their *Skushog* or not, but at the monastery itself they always refer to him as the "Mad Skushog" still, and can appoint no successor during his lifetime. The last news we were able to obtain was from a lama, returning from Lhasa and visiting relations near Leh, who said that he was still alive, and that he and his father had saved their skins owing to the latter's wise forethought at the time the deputation first fetched his son from Tibet Knowing the lad's extraordinary character, he had taken the precaution to draw up a document, stating that the Trigste lamas insisted on taking the boy away, both against his own will and the son's. This paper eventually saved their lives, but the father was subsequently dismissed from his high post in the government and relegated to a lower one, while the son seems to live in a place of internment somewhere in the Closed Land, though not in Lhasa itself, provided with a house and fields, but segregated with other renegades, where, as the Trigtse lamas put it, he has not now the power to do so much mischief.

Coming down the valley we meet our next Incarnation at Spitug, another lamasery picturesquely perched on a hill. When we first came to Leh, he was personified by an old man bearing the pontifical name of Bacola whose reputation did not savour of holiness. His other, and smaller, monastery at Sankar, just behind Leh, often received visits from him, so that he was not infrequently met on the six miles of road between. He died in 1917, but it was not for two or three years that we heard that he had been re-incarnated in the second son of the *rGyalpo* (King) of Marshro, a petty Rajahship some fourteen miles away. Through his mother, who, like the old Bacola, came from Zankskar, his present physical body is a great-nephew to his former one. When this small

person reached the age of five, he was brought from his home and with elaborate ceremonies inducted into office, the rites being performed at Sankar. From this time he remained in the care of the lamas, Meme Lobzang, our old friend at Sankar, being his lay tutor, while his spiritual instruction was undertaken by the Sras *Skushog* of Ridzong, of whom more anon, and with whom he sometimes went away for long periods. The present Bacola is a charming little person, with a big head and large wondering childish eyes, in fact, it is quite pathetic to see him sitting on his little throne in his own private apartment at Spitug, with the insignia of his office replacing childhood's playthings on the table before him, and to hear his lamas instructing him as to what to say and do in their most polite and deferential language. Once one of these satellites arrived in Leh, and earnestly asked one of the Memsahibs for a cabbage. "But," said she, "it is late in the winter and all our cabbages are done. We have not enough for ourselves." But the lama pleaded and pleaded,—even a little tiny one would do,—for the Baby *Skushog* was crying and would not be comforted unless they procured a cabbage for him. So the Memsahib searched among the few old vegetables left, until she found a little one that would satisfy his baby desire.

The *Skushog* of Peyang does not often visit Leh, and we have rarely seen him, but he is reputed to be one of the most erudite scholars of his own religion. He is of the red variety and holds sway over the Lamayura *dGonpa* also.

Finally, a few words must be said about the incumbent of Ridzong lamasery, a few miles behind the hills of Saspola, who also rules a monastery in Nubra, so has constantly to cross the Kardong Pass. This gentleman, with his refined scholarly face, is perhaps the most spiritually-minded and learned of all the neighbouring abbots. A member of the reformed yellow sect for whom celibacy is decreed, he has yet dared to take and acknowledge a wife, instead of indulging

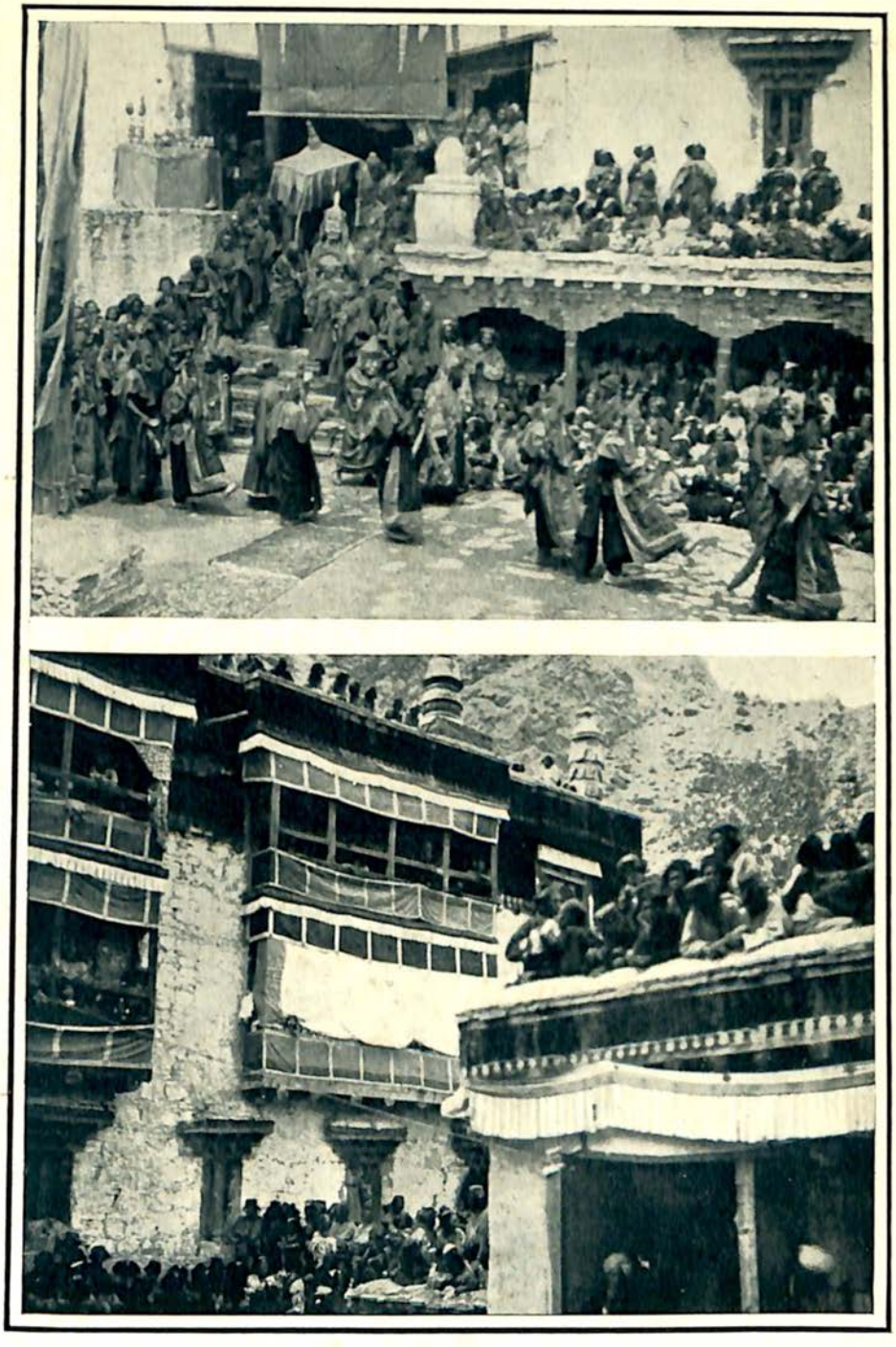
in the usual profligacy, which still must be legitimate for one who is a law-giver, and who can do no sin. This lady, who is addressed by the honorific title of *Bûm*, often accompanies him on his visits to Leh ; she is very resplendent with magnificent *perag* and jewels, but quite friendly, and when she visited us was most interested in our children and their toys and dolls, especially one of the latter with eyelashes ! The *Skushog* is generally known as the " Sras " or Son *Skushog*, for he is one of a pair of incarnations, the " Yab," or Father *Skushog*, being the priest-king, we have already met on our tour to Zankskar. In the present re-birth the son happens to be older than the father, but that is a mere detail in this system of re-incarnation, where the physical body is of such minor importance.

CHAPTER XXIII

Introduction to the Hemis Mystery Play

A DESCRIPTION of life in Ladak could not be complete without an account of one of the great annual festivals held in the monasteries in the valley, such as the *Gustor* (the offering on the ninth) at Trigtse and at Spitug, or the *Ghanggoni Thsedrup* (the fulfilment of life on the blue hill) at Peang, all of which take place in the winter, whilst the *Thseshu* is held at Hemis in the summer. The last is the most important, its chief feature being the presentation of the famous so-called " mystery play." The festival, as its name indicates, is held on the tenth day of the fifth Buddhist month, which is the birthday of Padma Sambhava, the founder of Lamaism, and still the presiding genius of the red sect. According to records in Sikkim, he was a magician who came north in the seventh century, and convinced the lamas of Tibet that he was sent as an incarnation of the Buddha. But into the pure Buddhism, he introduces the old *Bon Chos* with its devil-worship, and encouraged the most sensual practices, also the eating of meat and drinking of wine, asserting that over-indulgence in all these passions would lead to a state of high trance. Strangely enough, when we were waiting in the ante-room on a visit to the *Skushog*, this sentiment was exactly borne out by a Ladaki, who was participating in the native beer and already in rather an expansive mood. To our remark that it was not right to get drunk and lose control of mind and body, he replied that it was good, for the soul then became happy and blessed.

The date of the Hemis festival falls in our calendar at any time between the beginning of June and the middle of July. The later it falls, the more European spectators are enabled to get over the Zogi Pass in time to see it. Hemis monastery lies in the foothills on the south side of the Indus one-and-a-half marches from Leh, and is reached by a good road on either side of the river. Crossing the latter at the cantilever bridge, some four miles below Leh, at the side of which is a pleasant little *bagh* for picknicking or camping, the road skirts the upper edge of the prolonged village of Chushod, towards the further end of which are camping grounds. Then it passes over a long bare plain to another *bagh*, a welcome oasis in the desert, whence the path turns up across the hill to the right. Hemis itself is hidden from the valley behind a spur of mountains, but the gorge in which it lies is indicated by the long *mani* walls and white *chortens* which line the approach. Rounding the corner of this spur of hills, the eye is met by the usual series of terraced fields and the end of a long belt of trees, which fills up the narrowing gorge. Behind the mountains rise in ridges of well-marked strata, backed finally by rugged upright pinnacles on which the sunlight and shade play with fantastic beauty. As the road nears the monastery each turn reveals increasing fascination of brown rugged rock and green tree, and, above all, of quaint *chorten* with red-ringed superstructure above white pudding-like base, until at last the *dGonpā* itself comes into view, a long, rather low building, with the usual goblin-like dwellings of the village climbing up the hill at the side. The belt of trees keeps on the further side of the central stream, and at the time of the festival its enclosure is dotted about with wild rose trees, pink with blossom, a strange suggestion of the English countryside in this wild land of bare mountain tops. It is in this enclosure that the *Skushog* or Abbot allows his European visitors to pitch their camps, and even provides luxurious, spacious tents of his own for the more favoured guests, who



THE HEMIS FESTIVAL.

The dance of deities at the Hemis festival, showing the chief god descending the steps under his canopy, while those who precede him in the procession have already begun to dance.

THE "MYSTERY PLAY."

Spectators watching the "Mystery Play" at Hemis. The balcony with the curtain across it conceals the purdah lady guests of the monastery, such as the Hindu and Mahommedan wives of the down country officials at Leh.

are personally invited by him. At the lower end of the wood he has lately built a guest-house on the plan of the bungalows inhabited by the missionaries in Leh. On the side furthest from the road, directly opposite the monastery, the wood ends abruptly on the bare hillside of rock and stone. Climbing to a good vantage point on this, a delightful spot can be found to listen to the monastic evensong, and watch the shadows steal over the vast expanse of the river and valley spread out below.

Though the spur of hills cuts off the main Indus valley to the left, beyond it rises tier after tier of great bare lonely mountain tops, overwhelming in their immense majesty. Behind even these giants, the clouds lift to disclose still greater heights of everlasting snow. Truly one has now the impression of having arrived on "the roof of the world." In the valleys below, the lights and shades chase across hill and plain, and, as the moon comes up in the cloud-flecked sky behind and pursues her slow path through the white wind driven masses, the strangest wraith-like forms seem to rise and pass below. At first they appear to be white clouds tucked down between the lesser hills, but, as they move to and fro, it becomes evident that it is merely the effect of the moonlight between the passing clouds thrown on to the sandy spaces. Then across the stillness of that great expanse, hitherto only broken by the stream coursing down between the trees some way below and the breezes rustling their leaves, comes the strangest music, slowly rising in pitch and increasing in tone till the hills take hold of it, and roll its reverberations on among themselves, achieving an effect weird and fascinating beyond description. Turning in the direction of the sound, one sees to the left, in the darkness only, the faint outlines of the monastery building with dim lights shining in its windows, while other tiny ones twinkle fitfully in the quaint habitations merging into the hillside, whose queer ridged stratification is faintly perceptible, but one knows that on the roof of the

dGonpa strangely appropriate lama figures with fairy-tale hats are blowing long shawms, telescopic trumpets which pull out to about fourteen feet, while at their sides are other priests ready to take turn with their smaller flageolets. The strangely Wagnerian effects of these shawms, which is soon replaced by the higher tones of the other instruments, throw a plaintive, questioning, sweetly-sad melody out into the mysteries of the silent grandeur around. The vastness of nature's magnificent rugged mightiness, the elfish dwelling places and lights fashioned by human hands in this strange mountain fastness, and the haunting nature of the weird music under the star-spangled moonlit sky, combine to form an atmosphere which will last as long as the memory can recall them. Returning to camp, we almost stumble over a pile of sacks, and are surprised to hear a *zhu-le* and descry a head at one end. It is our own ponymen, who had been passed sitting round their camp-fire on our way out, now already tucked up under their sacks in the open. Proceeding more warily, more sacks are found covering watchers beside a mare who foaled the day after arrival, and yet she, carrying her load with her two-days old offspring at her side, will travel back with us next day, the long-legged wee thing occasionally getting a lift in the arms of the ponyman, and turning up at the camping place apparently none the worse for its fourteen mile run.

Up the sides of the stream sounds of revelry begin to arise from around the camp-fires of the many pilgrims, laughter and chatter and the rhythmic beat of dance music. Many of these pilgrims we have already seen on the road ; town ladies from Leh with immensely wide *perags* and all their gala finery, rattling with jewelry, their blue turquoises and gay capes of red and green showing up as delightful spots of colour on the bare brown landscape when they rode ahead. Stopping at any little spot by the roadside, where water is accessible to brew their tea, were little groups of wayfarers from the countryside below Leh and from the lesser known

side valleys, the latter at once detected by a slight difference in dress or dialect. Here came a group of Indian officials from Leh, in front the white turban and coat of the Tehsildar or chief magistrate on an alert little pony with one or two attendants, behind at a little distance his daughter in her closed dandy, then his wife in hers, and their carrying coolies singing as usual ; sometimes the wail of the baby was heard from within the curtain. Leh traders, who put up little temporary shops under canvas along the main street (a series of steps and platforms at the side of the monastery) a detachment of Gurkhas from the company stationed at Leh, two Ladaki girls riding on one pony with a male relation at the side, all these, and many more types we can study at leisure during the long intervals of the performance, which would be unutterably boring apart from the picturesque and varied audience, to whom we are as much a part of the show as they are to us. One more little group, passed as we neared the monastery, deserves mention. Placed on a sort of chair, railed on the four sides and fixed to his saddle, sits a wee baby *Skushog*, the Incarnation of the *dGonpa* at Stagna, about ten miles away. He wears the correct red *Skushog* robes, and processional riding-hat, and wobbles a bit with fatigue after his long ride. We stop to greet him and his attendant lamas, and find he is only six years old, in fact he looks less.

They draw aside to let us pass, and, as we look back to bid him adieu, the rich red of the lamas, the yellow-brown of his pony, with its small offspring sidling up to the mother adding a further baby element to the group, form such a picture against the green trees, *chorten* gate and distant mountainous background, that it makes us wish our camera was not packed up and ahead in our bedding. This tiny abbot re-appeared several times during the ensuing ceremonies, now on the roof, now in a balcony, now in a prominent corner just outside the main door of the *dGonpa*, always with his devoted lama nurse in attendance, and delighting us by his

baby antics, mimicry of the dancers, and enjoyment of the tamasha, till finally we met his diminutive Holiness being carried off in his lama's arms down the steps to bed, still full of beans, and turning from a blessing he was instructed to give to a bowing worshipper to look back at the strange MemSahib, and lift his hand to his forehead saying "zhu" to her.

Now we must turn our attention to the ceremonies and first endeavour to present their strangely fascinating setting. The European visitors are asked kindly to bring their own chairs, which are placed in a row on a covered balcony one storey above the court-yard and facing the main buildings of the monastery. These are four storeys high, the upper ones having a series of verandahs, each adorned across the top with a valance, in which the *élite* of the country sit. One of the upper ones belongs to the *Skushog's* own private rooms, and only himself, the old ex-King, who is now leading a priestly life as a hermit in a neighbouring nullah, and one or two high-born gentlemen appear in it. A large cloth is hung over it, so that their privacy may be maintained when desirable, but, during the performances, the old King is seen in full view, while the dark-blue spectacled eyes and clean-shaven and shorn face and head of the *Skushog* frequently appear under a raised corner. In the adjacent anterooms sit other honoured guests, while the lower storey balconies seem reserved for ladies, for many widely-turquoised *perags* are seen from time to time. Placed on the roof at intervals are sticks supporting yak's tails, three-skirted umbrella-like structures, and others made of yak's wool. At the left-hand corner of the court-yard a wide flight of nine steps leads up to the main door on the first storey, and this throughout provides a centre of unceasing fascination. Not only do the actors enter and depart up and down these steps, but the whole time they are peopled by lamas ascending and descending, sitting and standing, a most wonderful kaleidoscope of red, the extraordinary thing being,

that, in spite of every shade of that colour, scarlet, maroon, crimson, puce, claret, magenta, prune, in every stage of newness and fadedness being present, the total effect of what would ordinarily seem so clashing was a really artistic blend of colour, to which the eye constantly reverted.

To the right of the steps and at the level of the big doors, a platform projected from the main building, which accommodated a large number of spectators, and on the right-hand side of the courtyard were more steps and low roofs packed with onlookers. Another platform covered a roof which was entirely occupied by a gigantic prayer-wheel, so huge and heavy that two or three people must press against it with all their strength to start it revolving; but then what a mighty weight of prayer went round with each turn. Under the Westerners' balcony was the ecclesiastical band, the instruments being four pairs of cymbals and a dozen drums of the warming-pan shape with queer hooked beaters. Next to the musicians came the *Skushog's* throne, a raised platform with richly-cushioned seat and back, also long trappings, its high arch terminating the balcony above, while in front was placed a finely painted Tibetan table, flanked by vases of flowers. On the other side, level with the court-yard, were the remainder of the band, the two long shawms and the two flageolets or trumpets. In front of all the musicians were small tables which accommodated the holy books from which they chanted.

On the fourth and left side of the court-yard there was no wall, but a slight projection accommodated a large prayer-wheel about four feet high and three feet in diameter, which was constantly being set in motion during the waiting times. Beyond this was an open space prolonging the old quadrangle into another court-yard in front of the newer monastic buildings.

Between these two court-yards rough barriers, such as the trunk of a poplar or a piece of carved wood moulding from

some destroyed roofing, were placed to complete the square of the dancing theatre. The audience squatting on the ground were pushed back behind these as each scene opened.

In the middle of the main court-yard, some distance apart from each other, and supported by round whitewashed mud platforms were two flagstaffs, capped by yaks' tails ; they were almost as high as the monastery, and from their sides floated out many long prayer-flags. The scene was completed on the first morning, after we had been sent for and had taken our seats, by the setting-up of a large banner, which was let down from the roof above the main door and steps, on which was portrayed a young man with the Buddha type of face. This we learnt represented " Padma Karpo " his real name being " Dugpa Rinpoche." The next morning he was replaced by a more elderly gentleman, called " Galsas Rinpoche," the tutelary god of Hemis. Once in twelve years a still more important deity is displayed, and rites and ceremonies are performed in his honour, while the common people prostrate themselves before him. Above these banners each day a large awning with a yellow silk valance was protruded, whether to shade them from the sun subjectively, or objectively as regards the colour of the cloth, it is hard to say.

But before the drama opens, we must devote a few words to our fellow spectators who will provide us with so much interest and amusement in the long intervals between the scenes. During one of the most tedious of these, when we could hear the drums throbbing for some ceremony within the monastery, a Ladaki informant alleged that the monks had been receiving and eating the offerings of food brought by the common people from near and far. Judging by the size of the congregation this must needs have been a proponled ritual and a sustining meal.

During the acting they crowded on to every available space, roofs, balconies, galleries, steps, platforms, and blocked up all the egresses on the ground floor. Here and there were

proud possessors of umbrellas, which went up for sun or showers. Many districts and dialects were represented.

Here were two *Jomos* or nuns from Zankskar, to whom we talked later on when gathered round their camp-fire with their fellow countrymen, young girls of about seventeen and nineteen, sisters, with course manly faces and necks under their tonsured heads and yellow caps. They had come a month's journey over many a difficult pass, but were as cheery as could be. Conspicious were some conjurers from Spitti, who come to Ladak every year, and whose display we had often witnessed in Leh. With uncovered heads, their long hair done in a large number of narrow plaits gave a strangely effeminate touch to their tall, well set-up bodies. Dotted about were ladies from the district of Hanle, some two to three weeks' journey further up the Indus valley, easily distinguished by their peculiar *perags*, which, instead of coming to a blunt point in front, were cut sharply off above the forehead by a straight bar of silver. Many of the women from Nubra and the less known valleys of Ladak wore picturesque dresses of narrow material sewn together in strips with circular patterns stamped on at intervals, giving a striped effect, so pleasing that one wished it had not been put out of fashion by the town ladies of Leh. One old Tibetan with a dark face, looking as if he might belong to the Hanuman tribe, sat devoutly under an umbrella the whole time, and, whenever we looked across, he was turning his two prayer-wheels, which he held one in each hand. Such devotion had no doubt prevented him from attending to his wild unkempt hair for many a long day. There were also many ladies wearing nothing on their heads to cover their untidy plaited hair: these were nomads from the Changtang, the great northern plains far away. Now a small person takes up a central position and serenely breaks open apricot stones to extract the kernels, using a stone to crack them on the base of the flagstaff. A gentleman with a yellow silk brocade dressing-gown and

tremendous red hat is seen making his way purposefully through the crowd, and one wonders what, whence, whither? Then comes into view a curious figure with a tremendous prayer-wheel, a strange hat with a central peak, and a high scolloped turned-up brim, a conspicuous rosary, and two small drums on his back: a sort of gipsy lama, or shall we label him a mendicant magician in this land where priest-craft and devil-worship, ecclesiastical ritual and sorcery, are so closely mingled.

There we spy a typical Tibetan face, framed by a four-flapped dark orange cap; and now a pretty Ladaki girl, in a very Dutchy hat with turned-up corners and a little bit of gold embroidery, detaches herself from the crowd and makes signs to a friend on the roof above us, a delightful touch of colour being added by a yellow rose fastened in the side of her hat. Occasionally we spot a woman from Central Tibet with her round head-dress a strip of red-covered leather shaped into a ring, studded with turquoise and coral, and wearing the quaint striped apron which she and her sisters effect. In the corner, under the shelter of an overhanging roof, we find a little family comfortably ensconced, their baggage sacks having been arranged as pillows for a witchlike old lady who leans wearily back on them. Here and there stand out extra highly coloured hats on our own Ladaki neighbours, even the gentlemen having had their head-gear re-covered for such a festival. The flat Mongolian faces and quaint wee garments, generally raggedly elflike, of the babies, are particularly fascinating, especially one tiny man belonging to the front row in the quadrangle floor, who runs out into the arena every now and again to guilelessly practice the movements he has just witnessed, causing real joy to the crowd. One larger boy, caught trespassing by a monk with a whip, is seized and given a mock beating, which amuses him as much as the onlookers. Here are some Dard ladies from Hanu, far down the Indus valley, with their bag-like caps fastened down on one side and adorned with a row of needles (probably made in Birmingham).

So from time to time one interesting type after another appears on the scene and catches the eye. Always in the picture the ecclesiastic element is prominent. Most of the lamas wear waterbottles, square, flat bags with hole and cap at the top. These are used to put the holy water into, which alone they are allowed to drink when they fast. Some are covered with beautiful Chinese silk brocade, which is worn only by senior or superior monks. Quite a number of novices are about, boy lamas of all ages from about eight upwards. The majority of the crowd are, of course, our own Ladaki friends from the neighbourhood of Leh, with a good sprinkling of interested Mussulmans distinguished by fez and turban, and a few Hindu shopkeepers, clerks, and their servants. In the balcony at right angles to us, sitting next to the Gurkha sepoys stationed in Leh, is a hermit who lives in a little hermitage half-way up the hill about two miles from Leh. He looks anything but a hermit in his fine red robes, with hair done like the Spitti men, but wearing a lama's cap.

He is very restless, and his face looks peevish and certainly not meditative. But he comes out of retirement a good deal, for we have met him in the fields, and a week after the festival there was a gathering in the desert outside Leh, where the *Skushog* of Hemis consecrated for him a new *chorten* and *mani* wall, which he has built to bring blessing to the town, so he cannot be a man of poverty. At the festival he is provided with a deck chair, and a second day we see him busy tearing a long piece of yellow silk into strips, which we later notice adorning caps and garments, doubtless after having been blessed by the *Skushog*.

It was surprising how quickly this concourse of pilgrims melted away. The morning after the festival, when we moved out of the village at about 9 o'clock, it was almost empty again, neither did we pass many of them.

As we descended straight down to the bridge, crossing the

river to make the return journey to Leh on the other side, we passed a large *chorten* surrounded by small trees, on which was painted a hideous three-eyed monster, the patron saint of Hemis, and then caught up with one more fascinating little group of pilgrims. This trio were returning up the Indus valley to the wilds, two women and a man in the dress of nomads. On their backs were strange casks like old beer barrels with the outlet well pegged. Looking in over the top we found they were lidless and contained all their cooking pots, while the remainder of their travelling requisites, probably all their worldly goods, were packed on the back of the donkey, whose foal trotted at her side.

CHAPTER XXIV

Hemis Mystery Play—First Day

WITH this *mise-en-scène*, we must now try to convey some impression of the actual mystery play as performed at Hemis, and witnessed by us on two occasions at an interval of nine years. On the former of these the first dance was led off by the *Skushog* himself. His robes were very much like those of the other participants, but more ornate with many jewels, and he was distinguished by an overdress depending from the waist nearly to the bottom of his skirts, made of human bones connected into an interlacing pattern of real beauty. His mouth was covered with a thin white cloth, and an old lama with bare head and wispy grey locks, like a benign old wizard, went round at his side, and constantly wiped the perspiration from his face. This particular year was one of more elaborate ceremony, which only occurs every twelve years, including, as already mentioned, the display and worship of a particularly holy banner.

But at the performance we saw nine years later, the *Skushog* only occupied his throne in the court-yard for the first dance, and then retreated to his private apartments, from the balcony of which he watched the play. His entrance was an imposing ceremony attended by two ordinary lamas, and two wearing extraordinary hats with large, scolloped, turned-up edges culminating in a peak in front. Over him was held a large umbrella with gay skirts, and he was led, amid blare of trumpets and clash of cymbals, to take his seat on the throne

facing the main building, where his attendants prostrated themselves, and then retreated.

Two heralds then appeared on the roof in picturesque costumes : young lama boys with bare legs, short garments of the prevailing red, and yellow hats with turned-up brims. Their typical heraldic conches, from which depended banners decorated with dragons, now produced a very mournful sound, the great shawms of the band blew loudly their Wagnerian-like dragon music, and two masked figures appeared and ran down the steps. These were bare-legged, with short skirts of a pattern resembling an old chintz, hats with a low central peak and a round rolled brim to which a square piece of cheap red stuff was attached behind. Their right arms were sleeveless, and they carried the ordinary horsewhips of the country, a thong of leather on a short stick. These gentlemen combined the functions of police and jester throughout the ensuing ceremonies. They kept the crowds back, whipping even the ladies soundly, but harmlessly, with strong whacks on their sheepskin capes, and providing endless buffoonery to while away the tedium of the long intervals. Onlookers who passed to and fro across the open space were seen off with absurd gestures, or their gait grossly imitated as they unconsciously walked ahead. Small children were abstracted and nursed as babies, *pice* (the Indian farthing) were begged for with ludicrous entreaties, and all sorts of by-play indulged in to the huge delight of the audience. The favourite joke, which never palled, was to snatch off the hat of a casual passer-by, search it for undesirable inhabitants, pounce upon one in triumph, then throw away the cap in disgust. After they had executed a short dance, they at once began their policing operations by driving the crowds back with their whips, and entertaining them through an interlude of monotonous chanting by the musicians.

Then at last the real business began, the motive under-

lying the whole thing apparently being the propitiation of evil deities and demon kings, and the exorcism of bad spirits in order to secure safety and good fortune during the coming year, and, additionally, to exploit ancient stories and superstitions in order to increase the merit and glorification of the lamas themselves, thus enhancing their sacerdotal powers. The common people also must become familiarized with the demons which will beset their spirits after leaving the body at death.

With a fanfare from the band, thirteen dancers were ushered on to the scenes, possibly the number having some relation to the thirteen ages represented by the thirteen red rings on the superstructure of the *chortens*. They were preceded by two ordinary lamas, and two with braziers of incense and with heraldic hats and gowns, who subsequently retreated. The dancers themselves wore enormous hats, with wide round brims having rounded edges, and a tall structure about one-and-a-half foot high rising from the crown, with a picture of a skull on it. From the backs of these hats a number of brightly coloured broad ribbons streamed down to well below the waist, smaller ones being attached to the front. Over their mouths were thin white cloths which the *Skushog* informed us were to keep out the dust raised by the dancing, a desirable custom which only obtained at Hemis. In each hand was a stick to which more streamers were attached. Their robes were of rich Chinese silk and brocade embroidered in most beautiful combinations of colour. Over their shoulders fell rich capes with deep, wide scollops, and in front they wore aprons, both of the same beautifully-patterned material, differing in each individual case. The skull in the hat, and another one represented at the waist in front were constant reminders that this life is an illusion in which mortality reigns, just as at our own ancient feasts a skeleton was brought in to remind the guests of the passing nature of this existence.

Stretching out right and left arms alternately, advancing and retiring to and from each other and the centre of the circle, they slowly made their way round the court-yard in the direction of the hands of a clock. The dance was slow and stately, accompanied by the beat of drums and monotonous chanting, occasionally punctuated by cymbals. A curious effect contrasting with this measured solemnity was frequently produced by the cymbals making two or three loud crashes succeeded by a series combining *diminuendo* and *accelerando*, exactly imitated by the dancers raising their heels in time to the music and, as it were, settling down on to them. Each dancer was given a few pieces of sacred herb by a lama, and as they slowly neared the steps, two monks, one standing each side at the top, with heraldic hats and trumpets, blew a note at which sign the two leaders made their exit up the steps between the onlooking lamas. This was repeated for each pair of dancers as they neared the stairs, and was the signal for retirement in successive pairs throughout the play. The whole impression of this dance was introductory ; by incantation and movement to prepare the "astral light" for the mystery play, and by invocation to bring blessing on the performers.

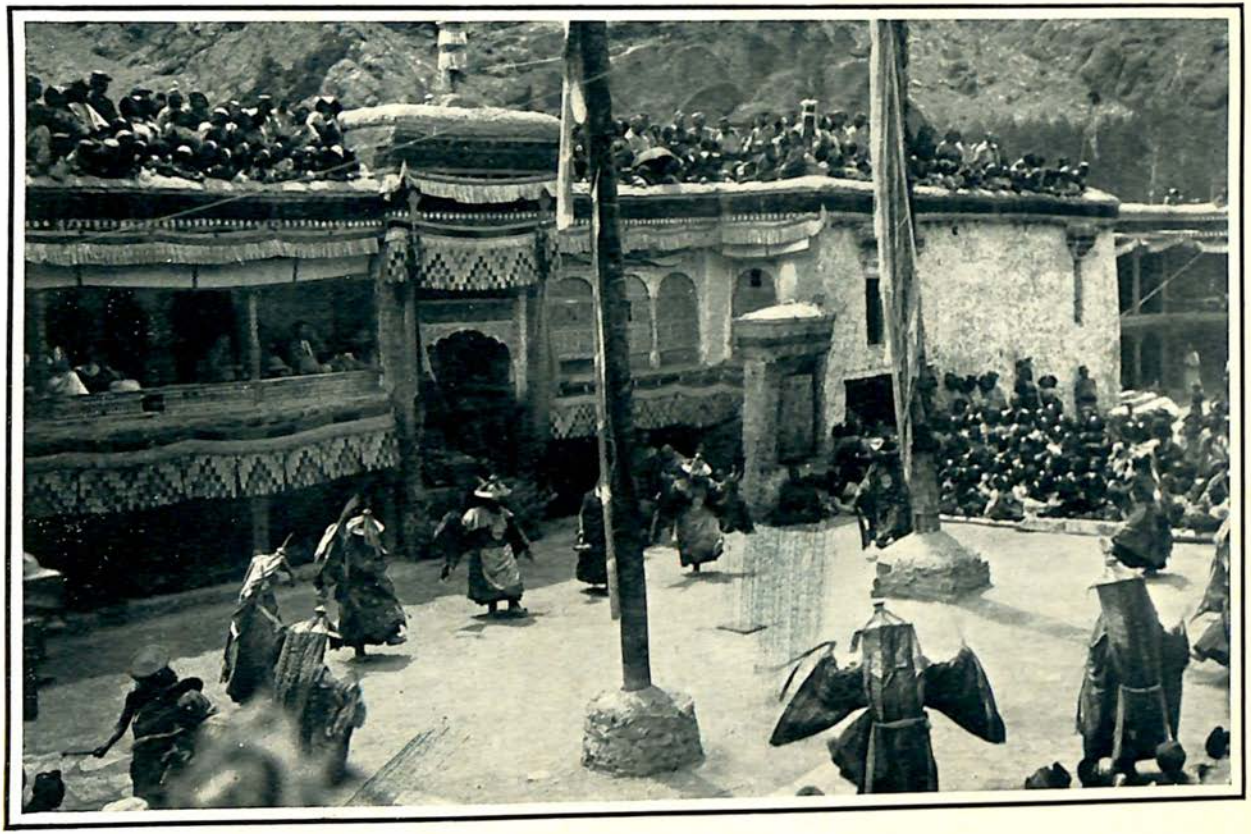
At its close one of the police-jesters ran round the court-yard with a censer of burning embers for further purification, and a continued incantation was maintained by the musicians to sustain the "aura" produced, and keep away bad spirits.

Now, with much crashing and noise from the band, a troop of sixteen dancers emerged, each carrying a tambourine and bell. Their hats were of plaited straw with a flat sign on the top shaped like the eye of a peacock's feather, and five of these patterns were arranged round the front of the head-dress. Their faces were partly hidden by a sort of visor of brass, with expansions representing the nose and moustache, and large spaces for eyes and mouth. These danced in a similar way to their predecessors, droning, ringing bells, and rattling little

drums, the latter shaped like a double tambourine, each with a bob on the end of a long string, which knocked the successive sides of the drums when rattled sufficiently. These performers receded in pairs in the usual manner, and all we could make of their dance was a further preparation by sound vibrations to frighten away evil influences. These noises are more potent if the metal which causes the vibrations is holy.

After a prolonged interlude, the band rises and stands outside the shelter of the gallery to greet a long procession of maskers, which slowly files down the steps. Meanwhile some rich strips of carpets have been placed on benches to the right of the court-yard, and another long strip on the ground to the left. First comes an ordinary lama carrying a flag, next one with a brass pot, its brim drawn out into a long spout and set with jewels, then a pair of lamas swinging censers, others carrying shawms with queer expanded ends, some with shorter trumpets, and then a series of masked figures, which come on so quickly and amidst such clatter and noise that it is impossible to distinguish forms and sounds until they have arranged themselves. Most prominent of all is a high umbrella-like canopy of red and yellow which is carried by a Chinese-looking individual with short black coat and long Chinese gown, wearing a hat of several embroidered sections, such as Tibetans use upside down under their head-gears for an eyeshade when travelling. He and another attendant hold the umbrella over a tall form clad in rich embroidered silk, the face hidden behind a huge mask portraying a benign countenance with converging eyes. Accompanying this being are seven other deities and two devil-masked persons. Of the other figures in the procession sixteen are dressed alike, unmasked, but with peculiar hats made of a triple crown of decreasing size, the topmost surmounted by a round knob. As all the figures proceed, acolytes swinging censers pass in and out between them, and

they gradually become distinguishable, the benign-faced gentleman under the umbrella taking his seat in the centre of the carpetted benches, with three of the deities on each side and a demon king sitting at each end. These two latter seemed to be guardians of the gods, who partake sufficiently of the nature of the demons from which these deities must be protected to be able to repulse them ; in other words, " Set a thief to catch a thief." They represent, according to Waddell, those deities of the old devil-worship religion, who, when Buddhism absorbed the latter, were forced to become *fidei defensores* of the new religion. Each of these demon kings has a third eye in his forehead, indicating that he can see on inner occult planes, the third eye showing that all things are known to him in all directions. The sixteen unmasked performers in turn move over to the carpet on the ground to our left, and sit there facing the deities, so that now we can sort out the minor personages. Attached to each row of sitters is a guardian with a cloth folded like a fan in his hand and wearing an ugly pink mask with a dropped gaping jaw which he can move up and down by means of his own chin. He walks along the front of his allotted row of figures fanning away evil influences, and every now and then has to divert his attention to ward off two apparently harmless imps wearing ugly masks, clad in yellow, each with a scarf and stick in his hands, and representing mischievous powers which try to intrude on the gathering. There also rushes in with shrill whistling, produced by placing the fingers in the mouth, four bare-legged short-skirted figures with three-cornered flags in their hats, whose capes are too scant to reach their bare waists. They seem to be high winds bringing messages from the four quarters, and each carries a *dorjhe* and tambourine-rattle. They do not seem to disturb the assembly for the guardian's fan is unperturbed, but the police-jesters have amusing encounters with them. We can now see also the other figures behind the seven seated deities, where



THE INAUGURAL DANCE OF THE HEMIS FESTIVAL.

On the left is the balcony from which the Europeans watch the performance; next to it is the *Skushog's* throne.

the Chinese-looking and other attendant still hold the umbrella, and sundry acolytes or lama boys stand at one end of the row ; one, a young novice, holds a small dough model of the organ of generation on a plate, whilst next to him another boy exhibits a large shell, and behind them stands a terribly dissipated-looking individual, masked with repulsive swollen cheeks.

There now enter four boys with warming-pan drums and hooked beaters, wearing hats of the inverted eyeshade type, like the Chinaman's, but with a large *Om* inscribed in the centre. These approach the deities, dancing, whilst the two imps of mischief try to get into the foreground, too. The boys range themselves in front, stop beating their drums and chant an incantation to which the Central Incarnation occasionally nods in assent, whilst the jesters and imps play about in the background of this solemn scene. These four boys having retired, the lesser deities rise in turn to execute a "pas seul," during which we can examine them more closely. In the centre we note that the chief personage, with the large passive face, holds in his right hand the *dorjhe* or thunderbolt, a symbol of great power, and a small bowl of corn—the first food given to man—in his left. He does not dance, but, beginning with the one on his right, the others rise alternately from each side of him. All are dressed in richest silk of most fascinating colours and embroidered with Chinese designs of dragons and skulls. Occasionally the jester goes round the scene with a censer, and the band of course continues to accompany the dancers.

The first of these has a mask with a blue face, a hat of three balls decreasing in size, one on top of the other, and carries a *dorjhe* and bell in his hands. At the close of his dance, the figure on the left of the chief god steps out—a deity with an insignificant small Buddha-like mask under a hat like a large stiffened lama's cap—who has to be fanned as he rises, and whose empty right hand placed against his chest is very

tremulous as he executes his steps, whether voluntarily or not, is not evident, though it ceases when he resumes his seat. From the right side of the first dancer rises a figure with a grey hat, resembling a *chorten*, bearing a wreath round it, surmounting a flesh coloured face, and, depending by long threads from his ears representations of the eye of a peacock's feather. He carries a tambourine in one hand and a bowl in the other, probably made of part of a human skull. His dance is more spreading and cumbrous than that of the others. Next comes into the arena the god next but one to the left of the head deity, one with a red face, carrying a shield and tambourine-rattle adorned with many of the peacock-feather symbols. Another red face follows from the other end of the row with the same ornament and several small skulls on his head-dress. In his left hand he carries herbs and a disc ; in his right is a spear with streamers attached to the handle. The final lesser deity arises from the left end of the row, displaying an orange face and a blue head with tiny knobs all over it, crowned by a chignon of the same, the traditional head of the Mongolian Buddha.

Depending from the back of this head is a square of beautifully embroidered silk, from which one's glance falls to the hands to see them covered with dark yellow gloves, too long in the fingers and full of holes ! How one would like to be initiated into the meaning of all this strange symbolism which seems so incongruous to Western eyes. Waddell suggests that the chief deity is Padma Sambhava, the remainder being his other seven forms, but that sometimes he is said to be the Buddha himself, the group being that of the seven Buddhas. Or does it symbolize the seven principles of human nature, seven being the sum of four and three, and the basic number of the present period according to Buddhist philosophy. Hence, for instance, the seven notes of the musical scale, and the seven colours of the rainbow have their significance. (*See* Chapter XVI.)

But the two demon kings have yet to take their parts. First the one on the right of the presiding deity rises for his dance, and, suddenly, with blare of trumpets, two more devils appear, also with the third eye, and wearing handsome dresses combining light saxe-blue and red in their magnificent colour scheme. Similarly when the turn of the other demon king, with his black woolly head, begins, another pair emerges to dance with him, also gowned exquisitely. This suggests the sudden increase of dancers at the witches' sabbath in Western mediæval magic. Finally, the sixteen unmasked figures arise from their carpets and approach the deities, and then with slow stately steps all proceed round the court-yard, and retire up the stairs into the porch. Thus after about two hours ended the first morning's performance, and we retired for lunch.

The first event of the afternoon was essentially a devil-dance, in which twelve masqueraders appeared either singly or in couples, each advent signalized by the picturesquely-hatted lama in the porch blowing his trumpet. The first couple were bestial with repulsive snouts, third eyes, and wearing aprons with skulls on them. Executing a few turns, they settled down to rest in time with the cymbals in the manner already described. Next to them came a black mask under a black wooden hat with a triangular flag projecting from the middle, the wearer carrying a big hammer with a *dorjhe* attached. Number four had horns and a black animal visage, while his neighbour's head-dress had a broad foundation with small skulls rimming the front, and piled all over it long coils representing a mixture of intestines and snakes, an end of one of the latter appearing over the front, showing its head, symbolic of desire and decay. The next-comer wore a hat with a chaplet of skulls round a woolly crown, and carried a sabre and a piece of wood like a knife-cleaning board. Three flags protruding from a turret-like structure decked the next head, then came another mask with five skulls over

the top, while the next element represented must have been a good one, for the figure wore a beatific though inane-looking white-faced mask. This bright spot among the other black-faced, repulsive monsters, however, was more than set off by the next comer, whose black mask had a most appalling gape, while the rear was brought up by two monkeys with dropped jaws and bulging upper eyelids. Save for the last fur-covered representatives of the Hanuman tribe, these hideous beings all of whom had the third eye, wore most exquisite gowns and aprons of Chinese silk. Their purport was not revealed to us, for, after a dance of the usual type and a low chant, they retreated, as usual in twos at a signal from the trumpeters in the porch.

The next act of this extraordinary drama was preceded by the placing of two small carpets on the ground near the left-hand flagstaff. One was square with a broad red border having in its centre a smaller square of tigerskin. The other was of dark blue, with an inner line of light blue demarcating a central white triangle, on which lay a mysterious object covered with a bit of thin dark blue veiling. The square with its four sides, the number of which indicates this earthly plane, and the triangle, which, by its three sides stands for the higher elements, thus represented the whole universe of earth and heaven. Two unmasked lamas brought out beer in a brass chalice, in shape rather like a Western coffee-pot, with rounded lines and a pattern chased in the middle of both sides ; also a small plate of barley and a cup. A third lama in an expansive yellow silk robe stood on the square facing the triangle, holding a bell and a *dorjhe* with streamers attached. The cup is given into his right hand, and to the sound of solemn chanting some beer is poured into it from the chalice. With more incantations he throws this away in the direction of the flagstaff. Into the cup, apparently reversed, some rice is then placed by the other lama, and that is also thrown away to the accompaniment of low chanting.

Next beer and barley are both placed in the cup, the ringing of the bell punctuating the droning song as this is done ; these are poured away also, and this libation repeated twice, after which chalice, cup, and platter are all taken away. The yellow-robed priest then dons his mitred hat, waves his streamered *dorjhe* three times towards the hidden object, and retires.

Two ghouls now appear on each side of the court, their heads and bodies covered with skeletal white cloth on which skulls and ribs are inadequately depicted by red streaks. Round their waists are kilts made of silk scarves, and attached to waist and ankles small bells like those on a jester's hat. Two of them carry skulls on sticks, and all wear decrepit white gloves on hands and feet, which have never known a " stitch in time," nor ever will. The compartments for the toes are particularly incapable of retaining contents and flap absurdly over their respective digits. These ghouls execute a dance reminiscent of our Sir Roger de Coverley, advancing to meet in the middle then passing over to opposite sides. One snatches the veil from the hidden object, revealing an anthropomorphic effigy of dough ; the lama replaces the veil at once, but again they approach and remove it, before making their exit with dancing.

There now enter four figures of the ogre type, with the third eye in their foreheads. One has an open mouth and protruding tongue curled upwards, another has a chaplet of skulls on his head-dress, while a third is an ogress with long trails of hair. Each holds a weapon with which to combat evil spirits : thus number one carries a sickle to pierce the heart, number two a charm to bind the body, number three a snare of rope to tie the hands, and number four a bell, whose tinkling will keep the spirits down. They are joined by ghouls in narrow trousers and tunics with ill-fitting toe-gloves, and all dance, finally leaving the arena together.

Now another procession files down the steps, preceded by the bearer of the jewel-rimmed, long-spouted beer-pot, the two lamas with musicians' hats swinging censers, and two more whose hats have scolloped up-turned brims, blowing their flageolets, all of whom move to one side when they have ushered in their ogre. He is a true King of Demons, with his big devil-mask, up-turned tongue between great tusks, and three eyes. For him a lama holds out the plate of barley, some of which he flings away four times, some to each of the four quarters of the earth. The remainder is placed by the uncovered effigy, which is left alone for a time. The heraldic five lamas leave the scene, and the Demon King advances in a slow dance to the music of flageolets, while four other demons emerge to join him, all with streamers in their hands, coloured rags covering the backs of their heads, and long earrings of the peacock-eye type ; all, too, have small skulls in their head-dresses, and a papier-maché one at the waist. A lama removes the platter of barley, then the Demon King approaches the dough figure and chops it up with his sabre, whereupon the lama distributes it to him and his four satellites, afterwards retreating to a low chant.

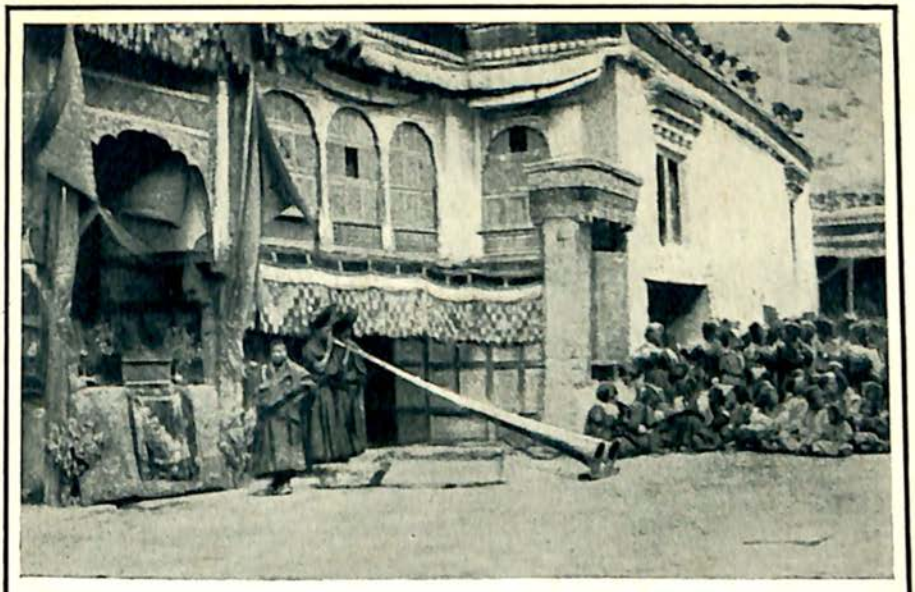
Again another type of demon comes upon the scenes dancing, and is joined by four others, one pair emerging from the crowd on the right, the other couple down the stairs on the left. Each carries a warming-pan drum and wears a yellow mask, yellow bodice and dark blue skirt, over which strips of tiger skin are arranged. On the tops of their heads are triangular flags. Again the priest approaches the dough figure and distributes portions to the five devils as they kneel round the triangle ; he then removes the remnants of the effigy and also the square carpet. Now, from right and left corners respectively, again approach two groups of five figures, demoniacal ogres with yellow, blue, red, and black masks bearing skulls, and all with three eyes. The five previously in the arena disappear as these ten new figures

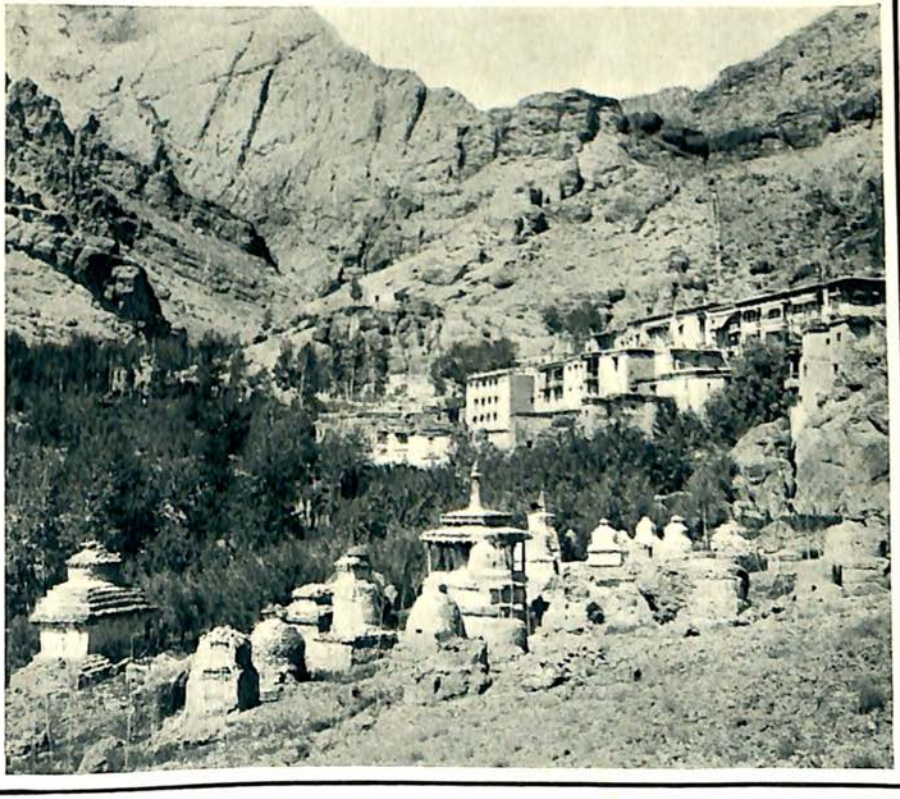
rush into the centre, amid the beating of drums, whistling and yelling, whooping and running about, thus demonstrating their demoniacal glee at the destruction of the enemy. The ten now dance together, ranging themselves in opposing fives, beating their drums slowly and quietly, and executing a sort of "Sir Roger" again. The band now stops entirely, while one of the dancers beats on to the end, until they all go out. We, too, with weary eyes and confused brains, are glad to retreat to our quiet tents on the hillside, trusting that the morrow may bring some elucidation of the purpose and meaning of the strange things we have witnessed.

CHAPTER XXV

Hemis Mystery Play—Second Day

THE morning of the second day was very disappointing, for, after a message having come for us to assemble just before ten o'clock, we had to sit expectantly for nearly two hours, and then were only rewarded by seeing a dance similar to the first one of the previous day. Our anticipation had been raised in vain several times by the fanfare from the heralds on the roof, or an overture by the band, and once even to high pitch by the sudden hurling of a number of lay-folk out of the porch and down the steps as though to clear the road, when they almost fell over each other in precipitous retreat from unseen forces behind, so that alarm for small boys in the crush was mingled with the joy of certainty that something was coming at last, only to settle once more into aggrieved patience. However, at last the band burst into full music, and a procession really appeared, preceded by the bearer of the jewelled beer-pot, at the side of which walked a lama with a whip, then two swingers of censers, then the two heralds, who led in apparently the same performers as in the first item of the previous day with the difference that a burning brazier was carried round to purify the way for an additional lama. This priest bore a ceremonial vase, something like a small tea-pot, adorned unfortunately by little tawdry skirts, and containing peacock's feathers. He led the way across the arena to a second outlet on the right where the dancers threw away sacred herbs. After this the dancing became more animated, with shrill





THE FESTIVAL AT HEMIS.

Showing the lamas of the monastic band blowing their long shawms. To their left is the *Skushog's* throne, and to their right a large prayer-wheel framed in a projection of masonry.

HEMIS DGONPA.

With *chortens* in the foreground. This is the monastery where the great festival is held annually. Hidden among the foothills, it has escaped pillage. Hence it is rich in treasure.

whistling, the beating of the drums and chanting being continuous throughout, while occasionally a clash of cymbals inaugurated an acceleration, when hops and jumps varied the monotony. When the performers had danced slowly round the circle, the trumpeters on the steps played them out as usual.

In the afternoon we again waited from 3 till 5 p.m. witnessing the preparations for a rather interesting display. Three sturdy little well fed ponies were brought into the court-yard. One was very gaily caparisoned, first with a rich fringed cloth covering his whole body, over which a beautiful carpet was thrown, above that a gorgeous saddle, and surmounting all a cloth of tiger-skin with a red edge. The other two ponies were given just one covering coat of patchwork with a border inferior in quality, the whole badly needing the attentions of needle and cotton. During the long waiting time which followed, a gentleman, who had evidently been enjoying the local beer, staggered about in and out between the ponies and round the area with smoking embers in a rough frying pan, saying "*so-lo, solo,*" (hurrah), and emitting weird noises which were apparently intended to raise the excitement of the animals, though this was achieved to a greater extent by the smoking embers being pushed in under their noses and close to their bodies. A figure dressed in Chinese hat, black coat, and yellow silk robe, holding a salutation-scarf, stood up by the flag-staff. He was extraordinarily motionless throughout the long time of waiting. A lama, with bare head and rich yellow silk robes, carrying a wand also appeared, he being the man in charge of these animals throughout the year. Each pony was held by a man wearing a hat with an edging of white goat or sheepskin. Underneath our balcony we next descried three black dogs, of which one seemed to drop out later, also with cloths on their backs, once gorgeous, now old, torn and faded, while to the right of the quadrangle two grey-white goats stood waiting.

As they waited, a lama brought out some long strips of red cloth printed with prayers, and climbing up the high flag-staffs, added them to the other prayer-flags for the wind to operate upon.

At last the ecclesiastical band appeared, on the roof this time, and the shawms and flageolets resounded ; then a lama brought out a silver tea-pot adorned with skirts and peacock feathers. He poured some of the contained beer into the hands of the patient Chinaman, on to the back of each of the animals, and some into the palms of each of their keepers, who drank it up with much relish. Then a battered old tin bowl containing blood-reddened clay was brought to each group of animals, and, their backs having been bared, they were well smeared with a bit of goat's hair dipped into the ruddy mixture. The ponies, now thoroughly excited, were led off at a gallop, and circling the monastery, were brought in at the opposite entrance, where cheered, hooted, and excited with much noise, they tore across the court-yard to re-appear and vanish again. The ponies thus circled the *d'Gonpa* altogether three times, the dogs only appearing once more, while the small timid goats were led slowly across once only, and then probably put aside for safety's sake. These animals represent the scapegoat idea as interpreted at Hemis, and once they have been chosen for this unusual ceremony are never allowed to work again, but fed and fattened at the expense of the monastery, and set aside for this ceremony until death. Some Ladaki informants also state that the ceremony is to dedicate the animals to the gods, the truth probably being that the gaily caparisoned one has some special purpose in this connection.

During this item a large pudding or cake made of some kind of flour mixed with water, the colour of mud and studded with white spots, was deposited on the ground in front of the empty *Skushog's* throne, and covered with a salutation scarf. This, according to a Ladaki onlooker, was to be dispensed

subsequently by the Abbot with his blessing. It was removed at the end of the sccapegoat performance, after which three ragged and dirty women brushed over the dusty courtyard with little bundles of reeds and sprinkled it with water.

In the early morning a low square platform of mud, about four inches high, and two inches square, had been made in the same place as the triangle and square carpet had been laid the previous day. Now a tray was placed on the platform containing a rough cup and some tins. Then a dancer emerged, with a three-cornered pennant projecting from a large round hat, wearing a rich cape over a dress of brocaded streamers and scarves, and carrying a small bowl made of a human skull in his hand. He upset the tray, but apparently this was unintentional, and a small lama replaced its contents.

Ten more maskers emerged in single file, dressed like the first, but one unfortunately had broken the stick supporting his pennant, and the resulting angle made it rather interfering in the ensuing mêlée. The three-cornered flags were of red with broad blue borders, jester's bells were jingling round the waists, while numbers one and ten had anklets of bells also. Their masks, with faces of blue, green, red, flesh-colour, and yellow, were merely hideous and leering, having no third eye, so they probably belonged to the class of earth-master-demons. The first comer, their chief would then be the " Great Guardian King," who stands in the middle, while they stand in two rows facing him. As they dance to an impressive boom of the long shawms, an ordinary priest and small lama boy busy themselves preparing a device on the mud platform, using pencils and colours from the tray and tins already there. The lama first draws a large triangle of purple, then an inner one of yellow ochre next a white outline to a broad light blue one edged within again with white, and within this a solid black triangle is painted. Selecting white chalk, he then sketches in flames all round the purple outside triangle, hieroglyphics in the light blue one, and a central device in the black. What

these were we could not make out. Meanwhile the earth-master-demons have been trumpeted out in twos, and now two new heralds appear in the porch, young boys with white powdered faces, who, blowing the conches from the corners of their mouths, bend the knees outwards, as they finish each long note, as though to expel it more effectively. Their instruments have handsome long tassels, and are blown three times to usher in a long procession of dancers. Group one are unmasked, but dressed like the members of the inaugural dance on the previous day. Next to them the herald boys with their powdered faces take their place, and we note their green shorts of brocaded silk under a long scarf wound about their bodies, and looped up and down to form a skirt. Their hats are like red tea-cosies with bands wound round the base. The third group consists of four members with hats of a papier maché type, like a *Skushog's* riding hat. (These hats and all the masks are made at monasteries, and consist of cotton material bound together by a mixture of earth and water). Scarves hang down from under the hats behind, and their dresses are of yellow silk divided into large squares by broad bands of red, while in the right hand they carry long iron sticks with four projecting pieces at the top, bent down and hooked to receive four rings ; in their left hands are large black bowls. Another group of four follows, wearing black masks, all of whom have a terribly evil leer with mouth drawn down at the corners, as though saying a perpetual "ugh." The first and third, dressed in black, carry in the right hand a knifeboard and in the left what might be either a loop of intestine or merely a snare of rope. Numbers two and four hold in their right hands a flat object about two feet long cut in the shape of a human figure. Their raiment is fashioned of stuff resembling a leopard's skin, with a sleeveless bodice and a skirt cut into strips worn over navy shorts. The fifth and final group comprises four men, with the vizor masks we have already seen. In their hands they carry sword and shield,

and to each of their backs is attached a quiver of arrows. Beneath the fine silk, sleeveless overdresses of these warriors, with streamers attached to the waistline, the warm homespun robes of the lama can be seen. The heralds, and, of course the gruesome quartette, are barefooted, but the rest wear ordinary lama boots. Each group in succession dances round the central mystic sign, sitting, when not their turn, on the carpetted benches in the corner of the quadrangle, which had been prepared as on the previous day.

The red square with its central tiger-skin was now produced again and laid down beside the painted triangles, on which another human effigy of dough under its blue veil was placed.

Now, preceded by heralds and swingers of censers, four figures dressed as in the first dance of the first day appear, each carrying a bell and *dorjhe*, accompanied by two lamas in their ordinary robes, one carrying the brazen chalice we have already seen, the other four cups on a tray. These two lamas pass to each dancer in turn, pouring into his cup a little beer, and adding a few grains of barley, while all chant in tone, and the band plays slow solemn music. This was, perhaps, the most impressive and stately act of the whole play. While the beer and barley were being actually served, the four performers were stationary, while the orchestra played and chanted a really beautiful theme, at the end of which the cups were emptied on the ground, the four figures bowed before the platform, themselves chanting, then, ringing their bells and holding out their *dorjhes*, again started their stately gyrations. This ceremony of filling and emptying the cups was performed six times; then the vessels were collected on a tray and removed.

With a whistle and flinging out of the dancers' scarves in time with the music, one of these priestly saints now takes his place on the square mat, the covering is removed from the effigy, and more incantations are intoned. Accompanied by

more whistling and flinging of scarves and a wild reverberating crash of music from the band, the priest then leaves the square mat, and all join in a final dance, retreating in pairs.

The next act seems to begin within the monastery hall, for figures appear in the porch dancing to music, but retreat into the shadows again. One lama with censers, and one with the jewelled beer-jug come down into the quadrangle, and take up their positions by the right-hand flag-post. Again a figure with horns is seen gyrating within the porch, and anticipation is enhanced by the band bursting into wild crescendos. At last the procession emerges into view, first the bearer of the jewelled beer-jug, then two swingers of censers, then the heralds followed by a troop of three-eyed demon kings. The leader is he of the horned mask, bearing a sabre and a cup made of a human skull decked with streamers. All the rest have skulls on their head-dresses, rich embroidered silk robes with capes, aprons and streamers, capped by masks of green, red, yellow, white and brown. The horned gentleman is their *sLobdpon* or chief. He approaches the effigy and sprinkles it with barley from the plate which has been left at the side ; then a lama steps in and cuts the effigy up, giving each demon deity a portion. No doubt this ceremony is rooted in the old cannibalism of the *Bon Chos*. The effigy has now been killed, and four grave-yard ghouls come in to dispose of the corpse, though it is the lama who actually removes the last bits. The four dance about, two of them standing over the platform, and with alternate bare feet rhythmically wipe away, or rather smear out in its dust, all traces of the mystic triangles. They then dance altogether in ghoulish glee, while the horned gentleman, proceeding in solitary dignity, leads off his troupe in twos. The skeletal ones dance on, getting more joyful, jumping round and round themselves, and leaping to and from the empty platform until their turn also comes to depart.

It would leave a more profound impression if the play ended here, but a final foolish little act is introduced, serving as a

complete anticlimax. A stool is placed near the *Skushogs'* throne, and the square carpet with the central tiger-skin, placed on it. An aged gentleman, with the large mask of an ordinary old man, but evidently very decrepit and tottery, is supported by five young boys with bare legs, short skirts, capes, and simple masks, with a bit of gay Yarkandi silk attached at the back to hide the hiatus between head and neck. A Ladaki onlooker says this gentleman is the one who attends to the feeding of all the masked lamas, and is called "rGyalpo (King) Achan." Supporting his failing steps, he leans heavily on his pupils, who eventually get him to the stool, accompanied by a masked and yellow-robed lama, carrying a warming-pan drum and a pair of cymbals, who squats on the ground at his side. One of the guardians with the moveable jaw, who watched over the row of benevolent deities on the first morning, enters with a brazier and rosary, and tries to help keep the high-spirited pupils in order. These jump about, laughing, boxing each other, fighting and playing, and making fun of their old preceptor. The old man gives them each some food, a piece of pudding made of uncooked barley mixed with water. He also offers them a piece of paper, and, as each in turn jumps to clutch it he whips them, to the great amusement of the crowd in the audience. On being handed the musical instruments he stands the warming-pan drum up on its handle, leaning it against his left knee, and, with his right hand, somehow manages both to beat it and to clash the cymbals on his right knee. To this music the small boys dance lightly and lithely round the flag-staff, receiving occasional whips from the guardian. They then jump about with whoops and cries, and carry on tedious little feeble bits of buffoonery, till even the audience gets weary and begins to disperse. The old man and his pupils in a close row prostrate themselves several times at full length before the *Skushog's* empty throne, obviously caricaturing this act of worship, then the boys stroke their aged teacher's head, tie a scarf round his

neck, and lead him away. By this time the crowds are all straggling across the court-yard, and the exit takes place in oblivion, giving a most absurd and feeble finish to the long performance.

Thinking over the mystery play in quiet retrospect, trying to discover a sequence and a meaning in its confused medley of sights and sounds, one has to confess that at the end a "mystery" play it remains. The *Skushog* himself has confirmed the idea that the effigy of dough represents a *chos-la gnodpa gtong-kan*, that is, a doer of harm to religion.

Even the common people have some idea of this, for on questioning an ordinary Ladaki as to its significance, he told me that it was an evil spirit that had been made to flee, but had come down from the hills to harm religion again. But, as Waddell says, "it is used also to convey to the people a vivid conception of the manner in which devils attack a corpse, and the necessity for priestly services of a quasi-Buddhist sort to guard it and the soul."

The constant apposition of incongruities is particularly fitting to this land for ever exhibiting things "the wrong way round." Even Alice's "curiouser and curiouser" is far transcended by the grotesque weirdness of religious conception here manifested. The rich embroidered silks, the dirty tags of commonest bazar cloth (probably a rag blessed by the *Skushog*) appended to the same person, the voluminous skirts and stately movements of cumbrous-large-booted personages, the difficulty of description that involves the introduction of a homely English object, such as a coffee-pot or even a knife-cleaning board, the mixture of rare costliness with tawdry banality, the introduction of mischievous imps and jesters into solemn scenes, the caricaturing of religion by its own devotees, the simultaneous inspiration of laughter and fear, all contribute to the general impression of a land of dreams and unreality. In the most solemn scene, where the four priests were receiving holy grain and wine with which to

cast their spell over the effigy, when the dance was at its stateliest and the music most awe-inspiring and beautiful, the right contrasting note was produced by the Baby *Skushog*, who had been brought by his lama nurse to sit on a vantage point at the side of the porch. There, in view of all, he waved his little hand in time to the music, imitated the performers, clasped his lama nurse in a sudden ecstasy of baby emotion, picked up dust and threw it in the man's face, was scolded till baby tears overflowed, then taken up, comforted, and shewn the peacocks' feathers and other pretty things on the altar underneath the great banner, till his equanimity was restored, in fact provided quite a little unconscious entertainment of his own. In appreciating all these fantastic effects, one's reason abruptly brings one up against our Western ignorance: how little we can understand the complicated symbolism of the East, and how utterly ignorant we are of the customs embraced in their signification, traceable back to an antiquity so far exceeding any of which we have cognisance.

CHAPTER XXVI

The Lure of Ladak

THE festival at Hemis is, as it were, a grand climax to all the strange things we see and find in this extraordinary country, which culminate in its religious practices. We have described lightly the outward ceremonies and appearances of the masque, emphasizing perhaps its humorous details, conscious and unconscious : yet, when we review it as a whole, we cannot but be appalled at its deeper significance, nor can we fail to realize that this country of cheery, attractive, lovable folk is a prey to the most rampant demonology. Where all the best religions of the world will at least point upwards, as it were, to "whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report" as worthy of contemplation, here the whole force of Lamaism directs the people's attention downwards to that which is impure, ugly, evil. Surely in spiritual matters they are "upside down" rather than we. The study of their horoscopy alone impresses one with the terrible burden of it all, the endless costly offices imposed on the common ignorant, superstitious people by Lamaism. It is rightly stated that "one family alone is prescribed a sufficient number of sacerdotal tasks to engage a couple of lamas fairly fully for several months of the year."

The rites enjoined to overcome the difficulties of the conflicting horoscopes of relations dwelling together, the ceremonies necessary to nullify evil influences in connection, not only with the crises of life to which we have referred, but with

other lesser events in the family activities and even in the surrounding neighbourhood, all are used to exploit the credulity and fears of a primitive people for the enrichment in money and power of a set of priests, themselves with little education, save the reading of their "holy" books. Thus, apart from the exercise of these functions, the lamas, who are said to constitute almost one third of the population, lead useless lives of indolence and indulgence, contributing nothing to the economical and certainly not to the spiritual welfare of their fellow countrymen, but merely absorbing their hard-earned riches in parasitical luxury. As an observer from the Chinese side has recorded, "Lamaism is responsible for having sapped the manhood of Mongolia of its energy and initiative, and deadened its intellect." By segregating such a large proportion of its young manhood into an enforced and false celibacy, it lowers the birth-rate as well as the moral standard of the country. How infinitely removed are these evil practices from the pure teachings of the Buddha, whose name has been associated with the veneer of reform introduced into this devil-worship. The wonder is that the people remain as wholesome and cheery as they do, and no visitor to Ladak will deny the attractiveness of this sturdy hill race.

Indeed they are part of that lure of Ladak which every year provides the British Joint Commissioner with a waiting list for travellers desiring passes far longer than that of the successful applicants. Falling into a different category from the ordinary visitor is the sportsman, whose pass is included in his shooting license, men, and even women, to whose primeval hunting instincts the great hills call. The mere traveller may be lured by the everlasting hills also, or the peculiar bare country, or its strange inhabitants and their quaint customs. The mere joy of the road calls some, while few can on arrival resist being curio hunters, and during their brief visits concentrate their attention on any of the following : the cups of rare china, the more common wooden ones lined wtih silver,

metal spoons, brass and copper tea-pots or other utensils, robes and other garments of Chinese design, turquoises, jade ornaments, furs and small carpets. Some of these visitors travel very simply, with minimum of servants and luggage ; others prefer a voyage de luxe with a long train of both. The former when invited to dinner, would fain accept, but regret they " have only shorts," and are happy to be assured that this is quite correct evening kit in Leh. The latter bring full evening dress, and one of these evoked a facetious comment from our man-servant. Unlike the custom prevailing in India, we train women-servants for the work in the house, while a man combines all the functions of water-bringer, gardener, groom, etc. This gentleman was asked to light a fire on the second occasion when a certain Mem Sahib was expected to dinner, although in this land of scarce fuel we had not thought of beginning fires for ourselves yet. His concise comment was, " Much meat, little clothes."

Then there are visitors who are specialists in some particular line of research, and, in the short twelve years during which we have been closely connected with Ladak, we have had among our visitors botanists, geologists, ornithologists, archæologists and topographers ; also devotees of the camera, even of the cinema, besides those of the brush, who comprise a list in themselves, from the mystic type of picture painter, the etcher, the futurist, and the straightforward colourist (if we may coin the term), to the lightning or snapshot sketcher. Some of these specialists have been organized into expeditions, such as the Anglo-Italian one, led by Sir Filippo De Filippi in 1913-14, and which passed on into the Karakorams and the Depsang Plateau, but was brought to an abrupt conclusion by the outbreak of the Great War. It comprised many experts in different sciences, and those who were engaged in gravimetric observations in the course of their investigations sent up several air balloons in Leh. These eventually descended in the surrounding

villages, and were the cause of much wonder and fear, out of which the lamas made a rich harvest by exercising the evil influences they were supposed to disseminate. This expedition was also able to receive in Leh wireless messages from Dehra Dun, perhaps a foretaste of broadcasting, even across the Himalayas. The Dutch expedition of 1922, and again in 1925, as we write, at work on the glaciers of the Karakorums, led by Mr. and Mrs. Visser with their Swiss guides must also be noted. Then there are our political visitors in the consular service, who occasionally come through this way from Central Asia, and even China, to say nothing of the interesting patients we have, not only medical, but occasionally mental, and we may say even moral, referring to those who unfortunately did not feel bound by promises contained in their signed passports.

Not only do these people keep our small European community busy during the visiting season, but in the long closed winter, and indeed all the year round, they solicit many favours. Thus the Doctor Sahib himself has been asked to collect butterflies, birds and their eggs, algae and fungi, ferns, flowers, stamps, curios and even mosquitoes by sundry enthusiasts, to say nothing of requests being made for long dissertations on the Buddhism and mysteries of Tibet by unknown theosophists in the Antipodes. Thus, among our acquaintances made in this relatively isolated spot of Central Asia, we may number, besides those of adjacent countries and our own British Islands, men and women from America, Norway, Sweden, Holland Switzerland, France, Austria, Italy, Russia, Persia, China and Japan, so that there is no doubt that the lure of Ladak is a real fact. Some of these travellers rush into print on the subject of their visits here, and we read their journalistic efforts with interest, sometimes amusement, others weave light stories of travel, while some of the deeper students engage in profound treatises on their own special subjects. Even a close connection of twelve

years with the country, however, can only touch the fringe of all there is to know of these interesting people, and we can only leave them regretfully, trusting that the future may bring tohers with more leisure and ability to tackle such an extensive subject.

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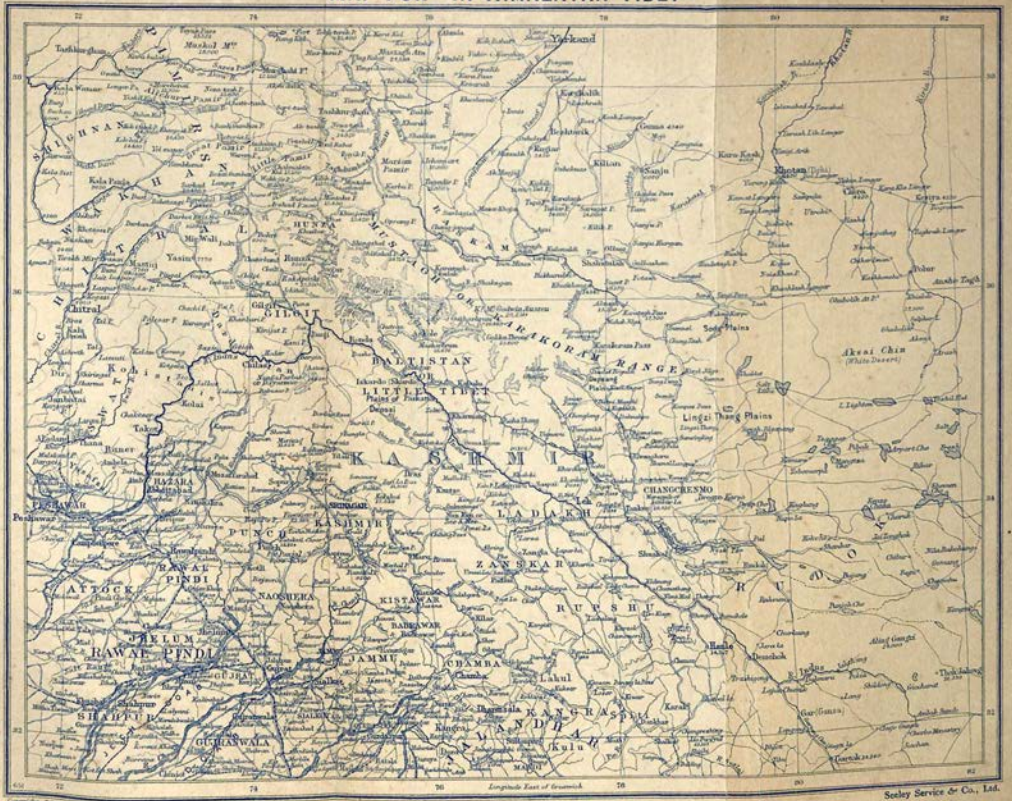
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Khotan (Ilchi)
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Shaksgam R.
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Tangtse
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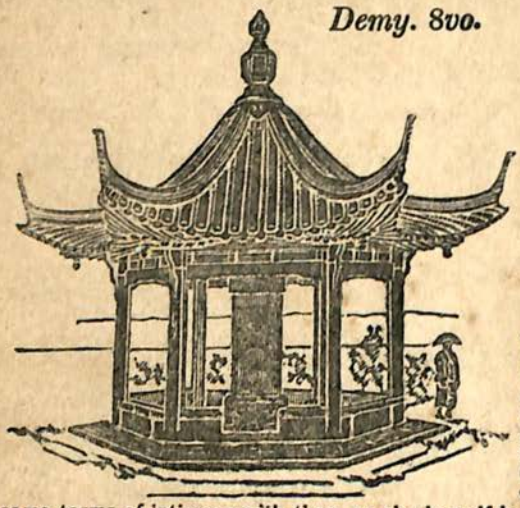

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